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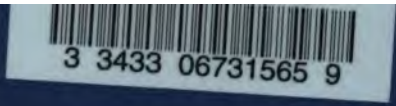
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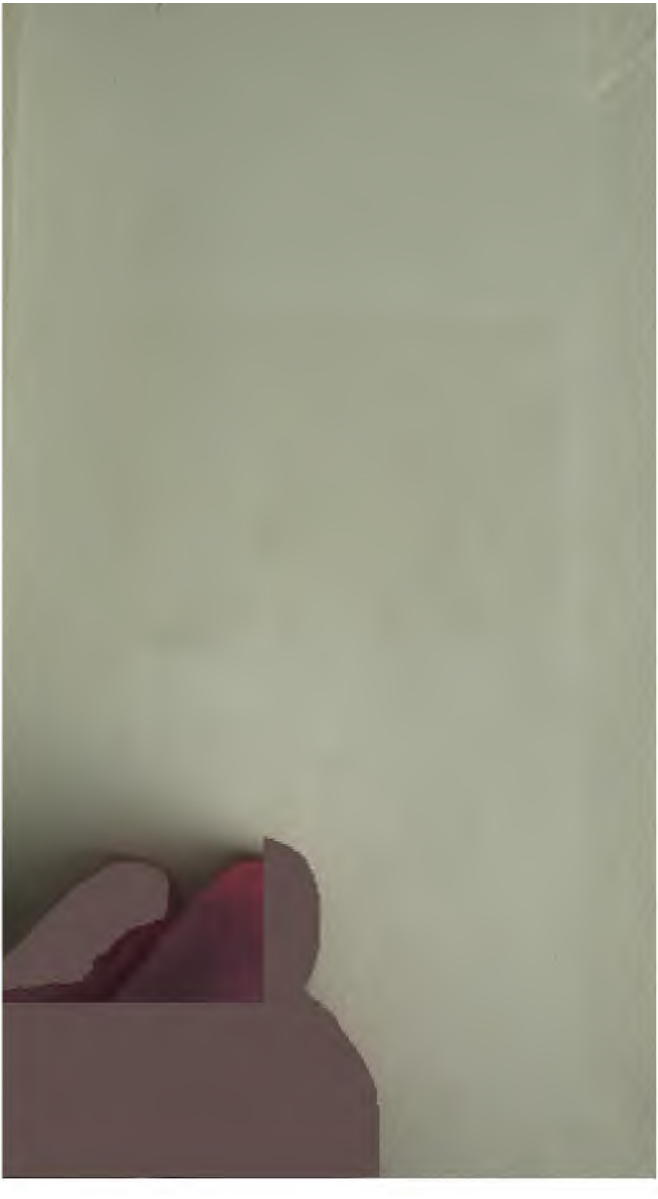

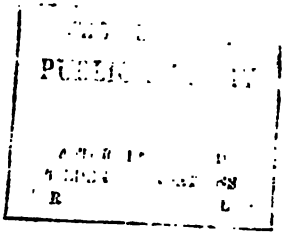

SÉMIRAMIS.

THE

DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

Mr. DE VOLTAIRE.

Tranſlated by the Rev. Mr. FRANCKLIN.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

Printed for J. NEWBERY, R. BALDWIN, S. CROWDER and Co. J. COOTE, T. DAVIES, W. JOHNSTON, R. FRANCKLIN, and G. KEARSLEY.

M.DCC.LXI.

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A DISSERTATION on ANTIENT and MOD TRAGEDY.

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The DEATH of CÆSAR. A Tragedy.

PREFACE to the Tragedy of AMELIA; or, DUKE of FOIX.

AMELIA; or, The DUKE of FOIX. A Traged

A DISSERTATION On ANTIENT and MODERN TRAGEDY.

IN

A LETTER to Cardinal QUIRINI, a Noble VENETIAN, Biſhop of BRESCIA, and Keeper of the VATICAN LIBRARY.

My LORD,

WELL did it become a genius like yours, and one who preſides over the moſt antient library in the world, to give yourſelf intirely up to letters. Such heads of our church we may expect to ſee under a pontiff who inſtructed the chriſtian world before he was appointed to rule over it: but if literature in general ſtands indebted to you, ſtill greater are my own obligations for the honor which you did me in tranſlating my *Henriade*, and the poem of Fontenoy, into ſuch el

gant verſe. The two virtuous heroes whom I celebrated are become yours. You have condeſcended to embelliſh my work, that you might render the names of Henry IV. and Lewis XV. ſtill more illuſtrious, and ſpread a taſte for the polite arts throughout all Europe.

Amongſt the many obligations which we of later ages have to the Italians, and particularly to the Popes and their miniſters, we muſt not paſs over the cultivation and improvement of the Belles-Lettres, which have ſoften'd by degrees the groſs and barbarous manners of our northern climates, and to which we are in a great meaſure indebted for our politeneſs, our happineſs, and our glory.

Under the great Leo X. with Grecian eloquence revived alſo the Grecian theatre. The Sophoniſba of the celebrated prelate Triſſino, the Pope's nuncio, was the firſt regular tragedy ſeen in Europe after ſo many ages of barbariſm: in like manner as the Calandra of cardinal Bibiena had been before that time the firſt comedy in modern Italy: you were the firſt that built ſpacious theatres, and gave the world ſome idea of that ſplendor of antient Greece, which drew together ſo many foreign nations at its ſolemn feſtivals, and became the univerſal model of perfection in every art and ſcience.

If your nation has not always equall'd the antients in tragedy, it is not to be attributed to your language, which is copious, flexible, and harmonious, adapted to all ſubjects: but it is in my opinion extremely probable, that the great progreſs you have made in muſic has in ſome meaſure put a ſtop to your improvement in tragedy: one perfection has deſtroy'd another.

Permit me then to enter into a literary diſcuſſion with your lordſhip, on this head. Some people, perhaps, who are uſed to the general ſtile of dedications, will be ſurpris'd to find me comparing Greek with modern cuſtoms, inſtead of comparing the great men of antiquity with thoſe of your illuſtrious houſe: but I am talking to a man of letters, and a philoſopher; to one from whoſe knowledge I may receive improvement; with whom I have the honour to be aſſociated in the moſt antient academy in Europe, whoſe members often employ themſelves in reſearches of this nature: I am ſpeaking, in ſhort, to one who had much rather give me inſtructions, than receive encomiums from me.

PART the FIRST.

On the Imitation of the GREEK *Tragedy in the* ITALIAN *and* FRENCH *Operas.*

One of your moſt celebrated authors tells us, that ſince the golden period in Athens, tragedy, deſerted and forſaken, wanders about from country to country in ſearch of ſome kind friend, that will aſſiſt and reſtore her to her former honours, but has as yet found none: if he means by this, that no nation amongſt the moderns has theatres where the choruſſes are almoſt always on the ſtage, ſinging ſtrophes, antiſtrophes, and epodes, accompany'd with ſerious dances; that we do not ſet our actors upon ſtilts, or cover their faces with maſks that expreſs joy on one ſide and grief on the other: if he means that the declamation of your tragedies is not noted and accompany'd with inſtruments, he is certainly in the right, and I don't know whether all this is not rather in our favor; perhaps our manner, by approaching more nearly to nature, is full as eligible as that of the Greeks, which had much more ſplendor and magnificence.

But if he only deſign'd to inſinuate, that this noble *art is not in* general ſo much conſider'd ſince the reſtoration

ſtoration of letters as it was formerly; that there are nations in Europe who have treated with ingratitude the ſucceſſors of Sophocles and Euripides; that our theatres are not like thoſe ſuperb edifices which the Athenians were ſo proud of; and that we do not take the ſame pains as they did in repreſentations, which are become ſo neceſſary in large and opulent cities; we cannot but intirely agree with him.

Et ſapit, & mecum facit, & Jove judicat æquo.

Where ſhall we find any public ſpectacle at preſent that can give us any idea of the Greek ſtage? perhaps in your tragedies, or operas: what, ſay the critics, an Italian opera like the theatre of Athens! yes, the Italian recitative is exactly the melopæa of the antients, a declamation in notes, and accompany'd with inſtruments of muſic: this melopæa, which is tireſome and diſagreeable in your bad tragic operas, is admirable in thoſe few which are good. The choruſſes which you have added of late years approach ſtill nearer to the antient chorus, as the muſic in them is different from that of the recitative; in the ſame manner as the ſtrophe, antiſtrophe, and epode, among the Greeks, were ſet to muſic, tho' they differ'd from the melopæa of the dialogue: add to this, that in many of the tragic

operas of the famous Metaſtaſio, the unities of place, time, and action, are obſerv'd; beſides that, thoſe pieces abound in that expreſſive poetry, and elegance of diction, which embelliſh nature without over-loading her; a happy talent, which none of the moderns have poſſeſs'd but Racine amongſt us, and of all the Engliſh writers, Addiſon alone.

I am ſufficiently aware, that theſe tragedies, which are ſo agreeable from the muſic, and magnificence of the ſpectacle, have indeed one fault which the Greeks always avoided; a fault which has often turn'd pieces finely written, and in all other reſpects extremely regular, into monſtrous and unnatural productions; I mean, the fault of bringing into every ſcene little airs and catches that interrupt the action, merely to ſhew off the quavers of an effeminate voice, that exerts itſelf to the utter deſtruction of probability and good ſenſe. The excellent author whom I juſt now mention'd, and who has taken ſeveral of his tragedies from French writers, has, by the force of genius, remedy'd in ſome meaſure this abſurdity, which is become as it were neceſſary. The words of his airs or ſonnets embelliſh the ſubject: they are full of pathos and paſſion, and ſometimes not inferior to the fineſt odes of Horace; for a proof of which I ſhall beg leave to quote that very affecting

ſtrophe

ſtrophe ſung by Arbaces, who is ſuppos'd to have been falſely accuſed.

Vo ſolcando un mar crudele
Senza vele
E ſenza ſarte
Freme l'onda, il ciel s'imbruna,
Creſci il vento, e manca l'arte:
E il voler della fortuna
Son coſtretto a ſeguitar.
Infelice in quello ſtato.
Son da tutti abbandonato;
Meco ſola è l'innocenza
Che mi porta a naufragar.

To this I will beg leave to add another fine air, ſung by the king of the Parthians, conquer'd by Adrian, when he endeavours to render even his defeat ſubſervient to his revenge.

Sprezza il furor del vento
Robuſta quercia auvezza
Di cento venti è cento
L'injurie a tolerar.
E ſe pur cade al ſuolo
Spiega per l'onde il volo;

E con quel vento iſteſſo
Va contraſtando il mar.

There are beſides theſe many others of equal merit; but what are the greateſt beauties when out of their proper place? What wou'd an Athenian audience have ſaid, if Oedipus and Oreſtes, juſt in the very minute of the diſcovery, the moſt intereſting part of the drama, had entertain'd them with quavering out a fine air, or repeating ſimilees to Electra and Jocaſta! We muſt therefore after all acknowledge, that the opera, ſo bewitching to an Italian ear by its muſical attractions, tho' on the one hand it may be ſaid to have reviv'd, has notwithſtanding on the other, in effect, deſtroy'd the true Greek tragedy.

Our French opera deviates ſtill more from the right point: as our melopæa differs more than yours from natural declamation, and is withal more languid. It will not allow our ſcenes their proper length, but requires ſhort dialogues and little ſententious remarks, every one of which makes a kind of ſonnet.

Let thoſe who are throughly acquainted with the ſtate of literature in other nations, and whoſe knowledge is not confined to the airs of our own ballets, recollect that admirable ſcene in la Clemenza di Tito,

between

between Titus and his favorite, who had conſpir'd againſt him : I mean the ſcene where Titus addreſſes himſelf to Seſtus in theſe divine words :

Siam ſoli, il tuo ſovrano
Non è preſente : apri il tuo core à Tito,
Confida ti all' ami'co ; io ti prometto
Qu' Auguſto n'ol ſaprà.

Or let them read the ſoliloquy that follows, where Titus has theſe words, words which ſhou'd be an eternal leſſon for kings, and the admiration of all mankind :

——— Il torre altrui la vita
E faculta commune
Al piu vil della terra ; il dar la è ſolo
De' numi, & de' regnanti'.

Theſe two ſcenes, comparable to the fineſt which Greece ever produced, if not ſuperior to them ; theſe two ſcenes, worthy of Corneille when he is no declaimer, or of Racine when he is not flimſy ; theſe two ſcenes, which are not founded on opera love, but on the nobleſt ſentiments of the human heart, are at leaſt three times as long as the longeſt ſcenes in our muſical tragedies : but theſe wou'd not be borne on

our Lyric theatre, which is only ſupported by maxims of gallantry, and ill painted paſſions, except the Armida, and ſome fine ſcenes in Iphigenia, works more admir'd than imitated amongſt us.

Amongſt the many faults of our operas, we have, like you, a number of little detach'd airs, even in the moſt tragical parts; and which are more inexcuſable than yours, becauſe they have leſs affinity to the ſubject: the words are generally ſubmitted intirely to the compoſers, who not being able to expreſs themſelves in the manly and vigorous terms of our language, require ſoft, vague, and effeminate words, foreign to the action, and adapted as well as they can to little ballads, like thoſe which at Venice are call'd *Barcarole*. Where, for inſtance, is the connection between Theſeus, juſt diſcover'd by his father on the point of being poiſon'd by him, and this ridiculous ſpeech?

* Le plus ſage
S'enflamme & s'engage
Sans ſcavoir comment.

But with all theſe faults I am ſtill of opinion, that our good tragic operas, ſuch as Atys, Armida, and

* i. e. The wiſeſt men often fall in love, and engage *themſelves they know* not how.

Theſeus

Theſeus, may give us ſome idea of the Greek theatre, becauſe they are ſung like the antient tragedies, and becauſe the chorus, even defective as it now is, conſiſting of tedious panegyrics on the * morality of love, does notwithſtanding, in ſome meaſure, reſemble the Grecian chorus, by continuing on the ſtage almoſt throughout the piece. It does not indeed, amongſt us, always ſay what it ought to ſay, nor inculcate virtue;

Et regat iratos, & amet peccare timentes;

but, upon the whole, one may venture to aſſert, that the form of our tragic operas, conſider'd with regard to ſome particulars, reminds us of the antient Greek tragedy. Several learned men, who are well acquainted with the works of antiquity, ſeem to think with me, that they are at once the copy and the deſtruction of the Athenian ſtage; a copy of it, as they admit of the melopæa, the choruſſes, machines, and deities, and at the ſame time the deſtruction of it; as they have taught our young men to be fonder of ſound than

* The original is 'la *morale amoureuſe*.' perhaps none but a Frenchman can rightly comprehend what Mr. V. means by this expreſſion: the *morality of love*, as I have literally tranſlated it, does not convey to us the true and preciſe idea: I thou'd be oblig'd to any of my readers, who are converſant with French operas, for a better interpretation of it.

ſenſe; to prefer the tickling of their ears to the improvement of their minds; the nonſenſe of ſing-ſong to ſublimity of ſentiment; and have beſides contributed to the ſucceſs of many inſipid and ill-written performances, which have been ſupported by a few pleaſing airs: and yet, in ſpite of all theſe faults, that inchantment which ariſes from a happy mixture of fine ſcenes, choruſſes, dances, ſymphony, and a variety of decorations, bears all before it, and ſilences even criticiſm itſelf; inſomuch that the beſt comedy, or tragedy we have is never ſeen ſo often by the ſame people with half the pleaſure as a middling opera. Beauties which are regular, noble, and ſevere, are ſeldom much ſought after by vulgar minds. Cinna, perhaps, is play'd for two or three nights; and the Venetian Feſtival ſhall run three months: a licentious epigram has more readers than an epic poem, and a little romance ſhall meet with more admirers than Thuanus's hiſtory. Our nobility very ſeldom employ good painters, and at the ſame time will quarrel about the diſtorted figures, and brittle ornaments from China. We gild and varniſh cabinets, yet neglect true architecture: in ſhort, real merit is overlook'd in almoſt every art and ſcience, in favour of agreeable trifles.

PART

PART the SECOND.

FRENCH *and* GREEK *tragedy compared.*

Happily for us, true tragedy appear'd before any of our operas, which might have ſtifled and ſuppreſs'd it. Mairet was the firſt writer, who, in a tragedy imitated from the Sophoniſba of Triſſino, introduc'd the three unities which you had taken from the Greeks. By degrees our ſtage became more and more refined, and ſhook off that indecency and barbariſm which diſgraced ſo many others about this period, and ſerv'd at the ſame time for an excuſe to thoſe whoſe unenlighten'd ſeverity of manners baniſh'd all public repreſentations.

Our actors did not indeed appear like thoſe of Athens, lifted up on cothurni, which were abſolute ſtilts, nor were their faces hid under enormous maſks with braſs pipes to them, to increaſe the ſound of the voice, and make it more ſonorous and terrible: neither had we the melopæa of the Greeks, nor any thing beſides a ſimple harmonious declamation, the ſame which you had for ſome time practis'd. In ſhort, our tragedies were a cloſer imitation of nature: we ſubſtituted hiſtory in the room of Greek fables; politicks, ambition, love and jealouſy took their turns to animate the ſcene; whilſt Auguſtus, Cinna, Cæſar and Cornelia, names

far more reſpectable than the fabulous heroes of antiquity, often made their appearance on our ſtage, and ſpoke as they wou'd have done in antient Rome.

I ſhall not pretend to aſſert, that the French theatre was in all reſpects ſuperior to the Greek, and ought to bury it in oblivion: Inventors have always held the firſt place in the memories of men; but whatever reſpect we may have for the geniuſſes of former ages, it does not prevent our often receiving much more pleaſure from thoſe who ſucceeded them. We admire Homer, but we read Taſſo, and find in him a variety of beauties which Homer was a ſtranger to. We admire Sophocles alſo, and yet how many of our good tragic writers have maſter-ſtrokes which, if Sophocles had liv'd after them, he wou'd have been proud to imitate. The Greeks wou'd have learn'd from many of our excellent moderns to unravel their plots more naturally, and to link their ſcenes together in that artful, though imperceptible manner, ſo as never to leave the ſtage empty, and to make the actors go in and out with ſome reaſon for ſo doing.—In this the antients are frequently deficient; and in this Triſſino has unfortunately imitated them.

I am ſatisfy'd, for example, that Sophocles and Euripides wou'd have conſider'd the firſt ſcene of Bajazet

jazet as a ſchool of inſtruction, where an old general, by the queſtions which he aſks, informs us, that he is meditating ſome grand enterpriſe.

But what did our brave janiſſaries? they
Pay homage to their ſultan, think'ſt thou, Oſmyn,
It is ſincere, know'ſt thou the hearts of men,
Or can'ſt thou read their ſecret purpoſes?

And a moment after,

Think'ſt thou with rapture they wou'd follow me,
And hearken to their viſier's voice again?

They wou'd have admir'd the artful method which this conſpirator takes in the diſcovery of his ſchemes, and the account which he gives of his actions; a merit which was unknown to the antient writers. That mixture of the paſſions; that contraſt of oppoſite ſentiments; thoſe animated dialogues between rivals of both ſexes; thoſe quarrels, reciprocal threats and complaints; thoſe intereſting diſputes where every thing is ſaid that ought to be ſaid; with all thoſe various incidents that are ſo well manag'd by modern writers, wou'd have aſtoniſh'd them. They might perhaps have found fault with Hypolitus for being ſo ridiculouſly in love with Aricia, or with his governor for giving him lectures in gallantry, when he ſays,

Where wou'dſt thou thyſelf have been,
If ſtill, like thee, thy mother had refus'd,
With mutual love, to anſwer Theſeus' vows?

Words taken from Paſtor Fido, and much fitter for a ſhepherd than the governor of a prince: but the ſame illuſtrious criticks wou'd be ſtruck with admiration at hearing Phædra cry out,

Who wou'd have e'er believ'd it, my Oenone,
I have a rival: yes, Hippolitus,
Whoſe ſavage and unconquerable heart
Was ne'er by pity or affection mov'd,
This tyrant loves, this conqu'ror is ſubdued.

The deſpair of Phædra on the diſcovery of her rival is ſurely infinitely preferable to the tedious and ill-plac'd ſatire on learned women, which Euripides has put in the mouth of his Hypolitus, who degenerates from the hero into a low comic character. The Greeks wou'd, above all, have been aſtoniſh'd at thoſe ſtrokes of the true ſublime which abound in our modern writers: how wou'd they have been charm'd with this:

What cou'd he do, my lord, when three oppos'd him?
He might have dy'd.

Or the anſwer, ſtill perhaps more beautiful and affecting, which Hermione makes Oreſtes; when, after having

ing inſiſted on his murthering Pyrrhus, ſhe finds ſelf unfortunately obey'd, and crys out,

What had he done, and wherefore did'ſt thou ſlay him?
What right had'ſt thou? who bade thee?

ORESTES.

O ye gods!
Did not Hermione herſelf command me?

HERMIONE.

And ſhou'd thou have believ'd a frantic lover?

ulge me in one more quotation from Cæſar's ſpeech, en they preſent him with the urn incloſing the es of Pompey.

Ye ſacred reliques of a demi-god,
Whoſe noble deeds and ever-honour'd name,
All conqu'ror as I am, I ſcarce can equal.

e Greeks, my lord, have beauties of another d, but I appeal to you whether they have any that mble theſe.

will even go farther, and venture to aſſert that antients, who were ſo paſſionately fond of liberty, I have ſo often ſaid that there could be no dignity ſentiment but in a common-wealth, might learn to

ſpeak

ſpeak with energy, even on liberty itſelf, from ſome of our tragedies which were written in the boſom of monarchy.

The moderns have moreover ſucceeded oftener than the antients in ſubjects of pure invention. We had many performances of that kind in the time of cardinal Richlieu: it was indeed his peculiar taſte, as well as that of the Spaniards: he was fond of forming plots and characters, and afterwards giving names to the perſons of the drama, as we do in comedy: and in this he frequently amus'd himſelf, as an agreeable relief from the fatigue of public buſineſs. The Vinceſlaus of Rotrou is intirely in this taſte, and all the ſtory fabulous: the author wanted to paint a young man of violent paſſions, with a mixture of good and bad qualities; a father tender and weak: in ſome parts of the performance he has ſucceeded. Heraclius and the Cid, taken from the Spaniſh, are both of them invented ſtories: there was indeed an emperor call'd Heraclius, and a Spaniſh captain who had the name of Cid; but ſcarce one of the adventures which the authors of the tragedies attribute to them ever really happen'd. In Zara and Alzira (if I may take the liberty to mention them, and which I only do becauſe they are well known, and therefore may ſerve better for examples) every thing is feign'd, even

he names. I cannot imagine after this, how father Brumoy cou'd ſay, in his account of the Greek theatre, hat tragedy will not admit of feign'd ſubjects, and that his liberty was never taken at Athens. He then ſets himſelf to work to find out a reaſon for a thing which ever was or cou'd be. 'The reaſon, ſays he, I believe may be found, in the nature of the human ſoul; nothing can move it but probability: now it is not probable that facts ſo noble as thoſe which muſt be the ſubject of tragedy ſhou'd be abſolutely unknown: if therefore the poet invents the whole ſubject, even to the very names, the ſpectator is ſhock'd; every thing appears incredible to him; and the piece can never have its proper effect for want of probability.'

Firſt, I ſhall beg leave to obſerve, it is falſe that the Greeks did not admit this ſpecies of tragedy, for Ariſtotle expreſsly mentions Agatho as a writer celebrated for it; and, ſecondly, it is equally falſe that theſe ſubjects never ſucceed; experience decides againſt Brumoy in his particular: in the third place, the reaſon which he gives for the poor effect which this kind of tragedy muſt have is no leſs abſurd; he muſt have little knowledge of the human heart, who thinks it cannot be mov'd by fiction: in the fourth place, a ſubject of pure invention, and a true ſubject not known, are abſolutely

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the ſame thing to the ſpectator; and as our ſtage t
in ſubjects from every age and nation, a ſpectator
turn over all the books that ever were written befo
can poſſibly know whether what he ſees repreſents
fable or hiſtory; but he will certainly never take
trouble: if the piece is moving and pathetic, he
naturally be affected by it; and when he ſees Poly
will never think of ſaying, I do not remember to
heard talk of Paulinus and Severus, ſuch people as
ought not to move or affect me!

Brumoy ſhou'd only have obſerv'd, that piec
this kind are more difficult to write than any ot
The character of Phædra was already in Euripides
declaration of love in Seneca the tragedian: a
ſcene between Auguſtus and Cinna in Seneca the p
ſopher: but Severus and Paulinus muſt be the pu
of the author's own brain. But if father Brum
miſtaken with regard to this, and a few other p
culars, his book is notwithſtanding upon the w
one of the beſt and moſt uſeful performances we h
and though I find fault with his errors, I have a
ſame time the higheſt eſteem for his taſte and e
tion.

To return therefore to the ſubject in hand, I once more aſſert, that it wou'd be want of feeling and judgment not to acknowledge that the French ſtage is infinitely ſuperior to the Greek, in the artful conduct of its plots, the invention, and beauties of diction and ſentiment without number; but, at the ſame time, it wou'd be the heighth of partiality and injuſtice not to confeſs, that love and gallantry have almoſt ruin'd our ſtage, and depriv'd us of almoſt every advantage.

It cannot be denied, that, amongſt four hundred tragedies which have been exhibited on our ſtage, ſince the time when it began to flouriſh, there are ſcarce more than ten or twelve which are not founded on ſome love intrigue, which is certainly much fitter for comedy: the piece indeed is generally the ſame, the plot form'd by jealouſy and a rupture, and ended in a marriage: one continued ſcene of coquettry, in ſhort a down right comedy, wherein princes act the principal parts, and a little blood is ſhed for form's ſake. The greater part of theſe pieces were ſo very like comedies, that the actors began at laſt to recite them in the ſame tone as they did what we call high or ſerious comedy, which contributed in a great meaſure to degrade tragedy, all the pomp and magnificence of declamation being intirely forgot. The players piqued themſelves on

the

the merit of ſpeaking verſe exactly in the ſame manner as proſe, without conſidering that a language above the ordinary language ought to be repeated in a * tone above the vulgar and familiar tone: and if ſome actors had not happily corrected this fault, our tragedy wou'd ſoon have dwindled into a heap of diſcourſes on love and gallantry, repeated without force or ſpirit, in a cold and lifeleſs manner: as a proof of this, it is not long ſince, amongſt every company of players, the principal parts in tragedy were known only by the names of the gentleman lover, and the lady lover. If a ſtranger had aſk'd at Athens which was their beſt actor of the lover in Iphigenia, Hecuba, the Heraclides, Oedipus, or Electra, they wou'd not even have underſtood what he meant by ſuch a queſtion.

The French ſtage has indeed of late years endeavour'd to waſh off this ſtain by ſome tragedies, wherein love is repreſented as a furious and terrible paſſion, worthy of the theatre; and by ſome others, where even the name of love is not ſo much as mention'd: never did

* Notwithſtanding what Mr. Voltaire has here advanc'd in favour of his tragedy tone, it is extremely diſguſtful to an engliſh ear; nor can indeed any good reaſon be given, why heroes and heroines ſhou'd not talk like other people: but mouthing, ranting, and whining, were for a long time as faſhionable on our own, as they can poſſibly be on the French ſtage, till nature and Garrick united to convince us of our error, and lead us into a better method.

love

e cauſe ſo many tears to flow as nature hath: the
art is generally but ſlightly touch'd by the complaints
a lover, but it is deeply affected by the melancholy
ation of a mother on the point of loſing her ſon:
tainly it was only in compliment to his friend that
ſpreaux ſaid,

* Love finely painted by the poet's art,
Opens the ſureſt paſſage to the heart.

he path of nature is a thouſand times more ſure, as
ll as more noble. The fineſt ſtrokes in Iphigenia
thoſe where Clytemnæſtra defends her daughter,
d not thoſe where Achilles defends his miſtreſs.
In Semiramis, the deſign was to have exhibited a
ectacle even more affecting than that in Merope,
ith all the pomp of the antient Greek theatre. It
ou'd be a melancholy conſideration to reflect, that
ter our great maſters had ſurpaſs'd the antients
almoſt every part of tragedy, we ſhou'd fall ſhort of
em in our repreſentations of it; but on our ſtage,
e of the greateſt obſtacles to any grand and pathetic
tion is, the number of ſpectators, that croud in with

* ——— De l amour la ſenſible punture
Eſt pour aller au cœur la route la plus ſure.
See Boileau's Art Poetique.

the

the actors; an indecency which caus'd remarkable confuſion on the firſt night of Semiramis. The firſt actreſs from London was preſent at the repreſentation, and was aſtoniſh'd: ſhe cou'd not conceive how any people in the world cou'd be ſuch enemies to their own pleaſures, as to ſpoil a ſight which they might have enjoy'd. This abuſe was corrected the enſuing nights, during the run of Semiramis, and might eaſily be intirely put a ſtop to. We may think ſlightly of it if we pleaſe, but an inconvenience like this is ſufficient to deprive us of a number of excellent productions, which I make no doubt wou'd have appear'd if we had kept our ſtage free, proper for action, and ſuch as it is in all other parts of Europe.

But this is moſt certainly not the only evil which calls for a remedy amongſt us: I cannot ſufficiently expreſs my aſtoniſhment and concern at the little care which we take in France to make our theatres worthy of the excellent performances repreſented in them, and of the nation which encourages them: ſurely Cinna and Athaliah deſerve a better place than a tennis-court, with a few vile decorations at top, in a bad taſte, and where the ſpectators are placed without any order or decorum; ſome upon the ſtage itſelf, others below in what they call the parterre, where they are crouded

and

and preſs'd together in the moſt indecent manner, throwing themſelves ſometimes one upon another, as if there was an inſurrection of the populace: whilſt as far north as we can well travel, our dramatic works are exhibited in theatres a thouſand times more magnificent, and with much more decency and decorum.

But above all, how far do we fall ſhort of that good ſenſe and fine taſte, with regard to every thing of this kind, which reigns throughout Italy! It reflects ſhame and diſgrace upon us to ſuffer theſe reliques of barbariſm to remain in a city ſo large, ſo well-peopled, ſo rich, and ſo poliſh'd as Paris is; whilſt, at the ſame time, a tenth part of what we expend every day in trifles, as coſtly as they are uſeleſs, might enable us to raiſe public monuments of every kind that wou'd render it as magnificent as it is populous, and one day perhaps place it on a level with Rome itſelf, which is our model in every thing. This was one of the great deſigns of the immortal Colbert. I flatter myſelf you will pardon this digreſſion, and attribute it to the love I bear to the arts and to my country. I am not without hopes, that one day or other our magiſtrates may be inſpir'd with the noble ambition of imitating the magiſtrates of Athens, Rome, and modern Italy.

A theatre, built according to the beſt antient rules, ſhou'd be very extenſive; ſhou'd repreſent a part of ſome public place, the periſtyle of a palace, or the entrance to a temple; and ſhou'd be ſo contrived, that one perſon of the drama, though ſeen by the ſpectators, might not be ſeen by the other actors, if at any time there ſhou'd be an occaſion for concealing him: it ſhou'd be made ſo as to deceive the eye, which is the firſt thing to be conſider'd: it ſhou'd be capable of exhibiting the greateſt pomp and ſplendor imaginable: every ſpectator ſhou'd ſee and hear equally well in whatever part he was ſeated. But how can this be ever expected upon a narrow ſtage, in the midſt of a croud of young fellows, who will ſcarce leave the actors ten foot ſpace? Hence it ariſes, that moſt of our plays are nothing but long diſcourſes; all theatrical action is loſt, or if practis'd, appears ridiculous. This abuſe remains, like many others, becauſe it is eſtabliſh'd; and for the ſame reaſon that we do not pull our houſes down, though we know them to be badly built. A public nuſance is ſeldom remov'd but at the laſt extremity. When I ſpeak of theatrical action, I mean dreſs, ceremony, aſſemblies of the people, incidents and events neceſſary to the piece; and not any of thoſe ſhews frequently exhibited, rather childiſh than

than grand, the reſources of art to ſupply the deficiencies of the poet, and amuſe the eye when they are incapable of charming the ear, or moving the heart. I ſaw a play at London, wherein was repreſented the coronation of a king of England with all the exactneſs imaginable: a knight, arm'd at all points, enter'd on horſeback upon the ſtage. I have often heard people telling ſtrangers, O! the charming opera that we have been at, we ſaw above two hundred guards upon the full gallop. Theſe gentlemen had no idea, that four good verſes in a piece were better than a troop of horſe. At Paris we have a company of ſtrollers, who ſeldom having any thing of real merit to repreſent, entertain us with fire-works: but, many years ago, Horace, who had perhaps more taſte than any of the antients, finely ridiculed all thoſe fooleries that bewitch'd the vulgar.

Effeda feſtinant, pilenta, petorrita, naves;
Captioum portatur ebur, captiva Corinthus.
Si foret in terris, rideret Democritus;
Spectaret populum ludis attentius ipſis.

PART the THIRD.

On SEMIRAMIS.

You will perceive, my lord, from the foregoing obſervations, that it was a pretty bold undertaking to repreſent Semiramis aſſembling the ſeveral orders of the ſtate, and declaring to them her intended marriage; the ghoſt of Ninus, coming out of the tomb to prevent the inceſt, and revenge his own death; Semiramis entering the mauſolæum, and returning from it, wounded by her ſon, and juſt expiring. There was reaſon to fear that a ſpectacle of this kind wou'd be diſagreeable to many; and in effect ſo it was; for three parts of thoſe who frequent the theatre, and were uſed to amorous elegies, combined together againſt this new ſpecies of tragedy. We are told that formerly, in a city of antient Greece, rewards were propoſed for thoſe who cou'd invent any new pleaſure: the direct contrary happen'd with regard to Semiramis. Whatever efforts were made, notwithſtanding, to ſuppreſs this ſpecies of the drama, which has in it all the terror of true tragedy, they cou'd not ſucceed: it was eccho'd on every ſide, both in writing and converſation, that apparitions were childiſh things to be

produced

produced before a refined and ſenſible people. But why ſo? did not all antiquity believe in them, and ſhall we not conform to antiquity! Has not our religion itſelf given a ſanction to theſe extraordinary ſtrokes of providence? and is it notwithſtanding ridiculous and abſurd to repeat them?

The Roman philoſophers had no faith in ghoſts in the time of the emperors, and yet young Pompey raiſes one in the Pharſalia. The Engliſh have certainly no more belief in ſpirits than the Romans had, and yet they ſee every day with pleaſure, in the tragedy of Hamlet, the ghoſt of a king, who appears nearly the ſame as the apparition of Ninus did at Paris. I am at the ſame time far from juſtifyng the tragedy of Hamlet in every reſpect; it is a groſs and barbarous piece, and wou'd never be borne by the loweſt of the rabble in France or Italy. Hamlet runs mad in the ſecond act, and his miſtreſs in the third; the prince * kills the father of his miſtreſs and fancies

* The original is 'croyant tuer un rat,' and a little before we are told that Hamlet 'devient fou au ſecond acte' runs mad in the ſecond act. Mr. Voltaire, as is evident from the whole which he has here advanc'd, ſeems, at the time when he wrote this, to have been very little acquainted with Hamlet, who, we all know, did neither *run mad*, nor take Polonius for a rat: but, as *Shakeſpear takes care* to inform us, when the wind ſat fair

he his killing a rat; and the heroine of the play throws herſelf into the river. They dig her grave upon the ſtage, and the grave-diggers, holding the dead-men's ſculls in their hands, talk nonſenſe worthy of them. Hamlet anſwers their abominable ſtuff by ſome whimſies not leſs diſguſtful: during this time one of the actors makes the conqueſt of Pologne. Hamlet, his mother, and father in-law, drink together upon the ſtage: they ſing at table, quarrel, beat and kill one another: one wou'd think the whole piece was the product of the imagination of a drunken ſavage: and yet, amongſt all theſe groſs irregularities, which make the Engliſh theatre even at this day ſo abſurd and barbarous, we find in Hamlet, which is ſtill more ſtrange and unaccountable, ſome ſublime ſtrokes worthy of the greateſt genius. It ſeems as if nature took pleaſure to unite in the head of Shakeſpear all that we can imagine great and forcible, together with all that the groſſeſt dullneſs cou'd produce of every thing that is moſt low and deteſtable.

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knew a hawk from a hern-ſhaw. But Mr. V. like other great Geniuſſes, is ſometimes a little too apt to take things upon truſt, and judge haſtily he wou'd not otherwiſe ſo raſhly, and ſo frequently, condemn the inimitable Shakeſpear.

It muſt be acknowledg'd, that, amongſt the beauties that ſhine forth in the midſt of all theſe horrid extravagancies, the ghoſt of Hamlet's father is one of the moſt ſtriking: it has always a ſtrong effect on the Engliſh, I mean on thoſe who are the beſt judges, and are moſt hurt by the irregularity of their old theatre. This ghoſt inſpires more terror, even in the reading, than the apparition of Darius in the Perſians of Æſchylus: and why does it? becauſe Darius, in Æſchylus, only appears to foretell the misfortunes of his family; whereas, in Shakeſpear, the ghoſt of Hamlet appears to demand vengeance, and to reveal ſecret crimes. It is neither uſcleſs, nor brought in by force, but ſerves to convince mankind, that there is an inviſible power, the maſter of nature. All men have a ſenſe of juſtice imprinted on their hearts, and naturally wiſh that heaven wou'd intereſt itſelf in the cauſe of innocence: in every age therefore, and in every nation, they will behold with pleaſure, the ſupreme being engag'd in the puniſhment of crimes which cou'd not come within the reach of human laws: this is a conſolation to the weak, and a reſtraint on the inſolence and obſtinacy of the powerful.

———Heaven
Will oft ſuſpend its own eternal laws
When juſtice calls, reverſing death's decree,
Thus to chaſtiſe the ſov'reigns of the earth,
And terrify mankind———

Thus Semiramis ſpeaks to the high prieſt of Babylon, and thus the ſucceſſor of Samuel might have ſpoke to Saul, when the ghoſt of Samuel came to tell him of his condemnation.

I will go ſtill further, and venture to affirm, when an extraordinary circumſtance of this kind is mention'd in the beginning of a tragedy, when it is properly prepar'd, when things are ſo ſituated as to render it neceſſary, and even look'd for and deſir'd by the ſpectators; it ought then to be conſider'd as perfectly natural: it is at the ſame time ſufficiently obvious, that theſe bold ſtrokes are not to be too often repeated.

Nec Deus interſit niſi dignus vindice nodus.

I moſt certainly wou'd not, in imitation of Euripides, make Diana deſcend at the end of the tragedy of Phædra, nor Minerva in the Iphigenia in Tauris;

nor

ıor wou'd I, as Shakeſpear has done, bring in the vil genius of Brutus appearing to him in his tent: wou'd never make uſe of ſuch reſources but when ıey cou'd raiſe terror, and at the ſame time carry on ıe buſineſs of the play. I cou'd wiſh, moreover, that ıe intervention of theſe ſupernatural beings ſhou'd not ›pear abſolutely neceſſary: with regard to this I uſt explain myſelf: if the plot of a tragedy is ſo tricate and perplex'd, that we can no way diſen- ngle ourſelves but by the help of a prodigy, the ectator perceives the diſtreſs the poet is in, and con- ıuently the weakneſs of his reſource: he only ſees ›riter who has made a falſe ſtep, and is put to his ifts to recover himſelf: the more aſtoniſhing it is, e more the deſign appears.

Quodcunque oſtendis mihi ſic, incredulus odi.

But I will ſuppoſe the author of a tragedy had it ncipally in view to inform mankind, that God netimes puniſhes extraordinary crimes by extraor- ıary means; I will ſuppoſe that his piece was ſo fully conducted, that the ſpectator every moment ›ected the ghoſt of an aſſaſſinated king demanding ıgeance, though the appearance was by no means

neceſſary to the clearing up an embarraſs'd plot. I ſay, that thus circumſtanced, a prodigy of this kind, ſuppoſing it to be well manag'd, wou'd have a great effect, in any language, age, or country whatever.

Such is, pretty nearly, the conduct of Semiramis, (thoſe beauties excepted with which it was not in my power to adorn it) from the very firſt ſcene we perceive that every thing muſt be done by the intervention of divine power; and, from act to act, every thing turns on this particular notion. 'Tis an avenging God who inſpires Semiramis with that remorſe which ſhe wou'd never have felt in her proſperity, if the voice of Ninus himſelf had not terrify'd her in the midſt of all her triumphs: the ſame God, by that remorſe which he had inſpir'd, prepares the way for her puniſhment; and hence ariſes the whole inſtructive moral of the piece. The deſign of the antient tragedies was generally to eſtabliſh ſome great maxim or ſublime truth: thus Sophocles finiſhes his Oedipus with obſerving, that no man can be called happy before his death; and in Semiramis the moral is contain'd in theſe verſes:

There are crimes
Offended heaven never will forgive.

A maxim

A maxim much more important than that of Sophocles: but what inſtruction, the reader perhaps may object, can ariſe to the generality of mankind from a crime ſo uncommon, and a puniſhment ſtill more extraordinary? I acknowledge, that the catastrophe of Semiramis cannot often occur, but what happens every day may be met with in the laſt verſes of this piece;

——— remember that our ſecret crimes
Are witneſs'd by the gods———

There are few families on earth where this may not be ſometimes apply'd: with regard to particulars of this kind, tragical ſubjects, that are ever ſo much above the fortunes of common people, have a real reſpect to and connection with the manners of all mankind.

I might indeed apply to Semiramis, the moral with which Euripides finiſhes his Alceſtes, a piece wherein the marvellous has a much greater ſhare than in mine, viz. that the gods employ the moſt wonderful and aſtoniſhing means in the execution of their divine decrees, and that the great events which they bring about, ſurpaſs the underſtandings of men.

Becauſe,

Becauſe, my lord, and only becauſe this little work of mine breaths the pureſt and moſt ſevere morality, I have taken the liberty to addreſs it to your lordſhip. True tragedy is the ſchool of virtue, and the only difference between a refined theatre, and books of morality is, that the inſtruction of the former is all in action, that it is more intereſting, and heightened'd by the charms of an art invented to make earth and heaven happy, and which was therefore truly call'd, the language of the gods. You, my lord, who poſſeſs this talent with ſo many others, will, I doubt not, pardon me this long detail, on a ſubject which perhaps has never yet been throughly underſtood; but which wou'd no longer be obſcure, if your lordſhip wou'd deign to communicate to me thoſe lights into antiquity, of which you have ſo perfect a knowledge.

SEMIRAMIS.

SEMIRAMIS.

A

TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SEMIRAMIS.
ARSACES, or NINIAS.
AZEMA, a Princeſs of the Family of Belus.
ASSUR, a Prince of the Family of Belus.
OROES, High-Prieſt.
OTANES, a Favourite of Semiramis.
MITRANES, Friend of Arſaces.
CEDAR, Friend of Aſſur.

Guards, Magi, Slaves, Attendants.

SEMIRAMIS.

SEMIRAMIS.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

The ſcene repreſents a large periſtyle, at the bottom of which is the palace of Semiramis. Gardens with fine hanging terraſſes, rais'd above the palace: on the right hand the temple of the Magi, and on the left a mauſolæum adorn'd with obeliſks.

SCENE I.

ARSACES, MITRANES.

Two ſlaves at a diſtance carrying a coffer.

ARSACES.

ONCE more, Mitranes, thou behold'ſt thy friend,
Who, in obedience to the royal mandate
In ſecret ſent, reviſits Babylon,
The *ſeat of empire*: how Semiramis

Imprints the image of her own great ſoul
On ev'ry object! theſe ſtupendous piles,
Theſe deep encloſures, where Euphrates pours
His tributary waves; the temple's pride,
The hanging gardens, and the ſplendid tomb
Of Ninus, wond'rous monuments of art!
And only leſs to be admir'd than her
Who rais'd them! here, in all her ſplendid pomp,
More honour'd than the monarchs of the Eaſt,
Arſaces ſhall behold this glorious queen.

MITRANES.

O my Arſaces, credit not the voice
Of Fame, ſhe is deceitful oft, and vain;
Perhaps hereafter thou may'ſt weep with me,
And admiration on a nearer view
May turn to pity.

ARSACES.

Wherefore?

MITRANES.

Sunk in grief,
Semiramis hath ſpred o'er ev'ry heart
The ſorrows which ſhe feels; ſometimes ſhe raves,
Filling the air with her diſtreſsful cries,
As if ſome vengeful God purſued her; ſits
Silent and ſad within theſe lonely vaults,

Sacred

Sacred to night, to ſorrow, and to death,
Which mortals dare not enter; where the aſhes
Of Ninus, our late honour'd ſov'reign, lie:
There will ſhe oft fall on her knees and weep:
With ſlow and fearful ſteps ſhe glides along,
And beats her breaſt beſprinkled with her tears:
Oft as ſhe treads her ſolitary round,
Will ſhe repeat the names of ſon and huſband,
And call on heav'n, which in its anger ſeems
To thwart her in the zenith of her glory.

ARSACES.

Whence can her ſorrows flow?

MITRANES.

Th' effect is dreadful;
The cauſe unknown.

ARSACES.

How long hath ſhe been thus
Oppreſs'd, Mitranes?

MITRANES.

From the very time
When firſt her orders came to bring Arſaces.

ARSACES.

Me, ſaid'ſt thou?

MITRANES.

MITRANES.

You, my lord: when Babylon
Rejoicing met to celebrate thy conqueſts,
And ſaw the banners thy victorious arm
Had wreſted from our vanquiſh'd foes; when firſt
Euphrates brought to our delighted ſhore
The lovely Azema, from Belus ſprung,
Whom thou had'ſt ſav'd from Scythian raviſhers,
Ev'n in that hour of triumph and ſucceſs,
Ev'n in the boſom of proſperity,
The heart of majeſty was pierc'd with grief,
And the throne loſt its luſtre.

ARSACES.

Azema
Was not to blame; ſhe cou'd not be the cauſe
Of ſorrow or diſtreſs; one look from her
Wou'd ſooth the wrath of gods: but ſay, my friend,
Semiramis is ſtill a ſov'reign here,
Her heart is not for ever ſunk in grief?

MITRANES.

No: when her noble mind ſhakes off the burthen,
Reſumes its ſtrength, and ſhines in native luſtre.
Then we behold in her exalted ſoul

Pow'r

Pow'rs that excel whatever flatt'ry's ſelf
Hath e'er beſtow'd on kings; but when ſhe ſinks
Beneath this dreadful malady, looſe flow
The reins of empire, dropping from her hand;
Then the proud Satrap, fiery Aſſur, guides
The helm, and makes the nations groan beneath him:
The fatal ſecret never yet hath reach'd
The walls of Babylon: abroad we ſtill
Are envy'd, but, alas! we mourn at home.

ARSACES.

What leſſons of inſtruction to weak mortals,
When happineſs is mingled thus with woe!
I too am wretched, thus depriv'd of him
Whoſe piercing wiſdom beſt cou'd give me council,
And lead me through the mazes of a court.
O I have cauſe to weep: without a father,
Left as I am to all the dang'rous paſſions
Of heedleſs youth, without a friendly guide,
What rocks encompaſs, and what ſhoals affright me!

MITRANES.

I weep with thee the loſs of him we lov'd,
The good old man; Phraates was my friend;
Ninus eſteem'd and gave to him the care
Of Ninias his dear ſon, our country's hope:

But O! one fatal day deſtroy'd them both,
Father and ſon: to voluntary exile
Devoted, long he liv'd: his baniſhment
Was fortunate to thee, and made thee great:
Cloſe by his ſide, in honour's glorious field,
Arſaces fought, and conquer'd for his country:
Now, rank'd with princes, thy exalted virtue
Claims its reward by merit all thy own.

ARSACES.

I know not what may be my portion here:
Perhaps, diſtinguiſh'd on Arbazan's plains
With fair ſucceſs, my name is not unknown:
On Oxus' banks to great Semiramis,
When vanquiſh'd nations paid the homage due,
From her triumphant carr ſhe dropp'd a ray
Of her own glory on Arſaces' head:
But oft the ſoldier, honour'd in the field,
In courts neglected lies, and is forgotten.
My father told me in his dying hour
The fortune of Arſaces here depended
Upon the common cauſe; then gave to me
Theſe precious relicks, which from ev'ry eye
He had preſerv'd: I muſt deliver them
To the high-prieſt, for he alone can judge,
And know their value: I muſt talk with him

In ſecret, touching my own fate, for he
Can beſt conduct me to Semiramis.

MITRANES.

He ſeldom ſees the queen: in ſolitude
Obſcure he lives: his holy miniſtry
Engroſſes all his care; without ambition,
Fearleſs, and void of art: is always ſeen
Within the temple, never at the court:
Never affects the pride of rank and title,
Nor his tiara near the diadem
Immodeſt wears: the leſs he ſeeks for greatneſs,
The more is he admir'd, the more rever'd:
I have acceſs to ev'ry avenue
Of his retirement in this ſacred place,
And can this moment talk to him in ſecret;
E'er day's too far advanc'd I'll bring him hither.

SCENE II.

ARSACES alone.

Immortal gods! for what am I reſerv'd?
Make known your will: why did my dying father
Thus ſend me to the ſanctuary, me
A ſoldier, bred amidſt the din of arms?
A lover too? How can Arſaces ſerve
The gods of the Chaldeans?—Ha! what voice

From

From yonder tomb in plaintive accents ſtrikes
My frighted ear, and makes my hair to ſtand
An end with horror! Near this place I've heard
The ſpirit of Ninus dwells—again it ſhrieks—
It ſhocks my ſoul—Ye dark and dreary caves,
And thou, the ſhade of my illuſtrious maſter,
Thou voice of heav'n, what woud'ſt thou with Arſaces?

SCENE III.

ARSACES, OROES, the high-prieſt, the magi attending him, MITRANES.

MITRANES.

[Speaking to Oroes.

He's here, my lord, and waits to give you up
Thoſe precious relicks.

ARSACES.

Moſt revered father,
Permit a ſoldier to approach your preſence,
Pleas'd to fulfil a father's laſt command,
One whom you deign'd to love; thus at your feet,
Obedient to his will, I here reſign them.

OROES.

Welcome! thou brave and noble youth! that God
Who governs all, and not a father's will,
Guided thee here: Phraates was my friend;
Dear is his mem'ry to me; thou ſhalt know

Perhaps

Perhaps hereafter how I love his ſon:
Where are the gifts he ſent me?

ARSACES.

[The ſlaves deliver the coffer to two of the magi, who place it on an altar.

Here, my lord.

OROES.

[Opening the coffer, bowing reverentially to it, and ſeeming greatly affected.

Ye ſacred relicks! do theſe eyes at length
Behold you! O I weep for joy to preſs
Theſe monuments of woe, whilſt tears recall
My ſolemn oath: Mitranes, let no ear
Profane diſturb our holy myſtery:
We wou'd be private.

[The magi retire.

Mark this ſeal, Arſaces:
'Tis that which to the laws of Ninus gave
Their public force, and kept the world in awe:
The letter too, which with his dying hand
He wrote: Arſaces, view the wreath that crown'd
His royal brows, and his victorious ſword:
The vanquiſh'd Medes and Perſians felt its pow'r;
It comes at laſt to vindicate its maſter,
And to revenge him: uſeleſs inſtrument

Againſt

Againſt baſe treach'ry, and deſtructive poiſon,
Whoſe mortal—

ARSACES.

Heaven! what ſay'ſt thou?

OROES.

The dread ſecret
Hath long been hid in darkneſs from the eyes
Of men within this ſepulchre; the ſhade
Of Ninus, and offended heav'n, long time
Have rais'd their voice in vain, and call'd for vengeance.

ARSACES.

It muſt be as thou ſay'ſt: for know, but now,
Ev'n on this ſpot, I heard moſt dreadful groans.

OROES.

It was the voice of Ninus.

ARSACES.

Twice the noiſe
Affrighted me.

OROES.

T'was he: he calls for vengeance.

ARSACES.

He has a right to aſk it: but on whom?

OROES.

On the vile murth'rers, whoſe deteſted hands
Had of the beſt of ſov'reigns robb'd mankind;

No tracks are left behind of the baſe treaſon,
But all with him lies bury'd in the tomb:
With eaſe might they deceive the ſons of men,
But not th' all-ſeeing eye of watchful heav'n,
Which pierces the deep night of human falſehood.

ARSACES.

O! wou'd to heav'n this feeble hand had pow'r
To puniſh crimes like theſe! I know not wherefore,
But when I caſt my eyes towards yon tomb,
New horrors riſe: O might I not conſult
That venerable ſhade, th' inhabitant
Of thoſe dark manſions?

ORŒS.

No; it is forbidden:
An oracle ſevere long ſince denounc'd
The wrath of heav'n againſt whoe'er ſhou'd preſs
Into this vale of tears, inhabited
By death and the avenging gods: await
With me, Arſaces, for the day of juſtice:
Soon will it come, and all ſhall be accompliſh'd:
I can no more: ſequeſter'd from the world,
I pray in ſecret to offended heav'n,
Which, as it wills, commiſſions me to ſpeak,
Or cloſe my lips in ſilence: I have ſaid

All that I dare, and all I ought: be careful
Leaſt in theſe walls a word, or look, or geſture,
Betray the ſecret which the god by me
Hath truſted with thee; for on that depends
His glory, Aſia's welfare, and thy life.
Approach, ye magi, hide theſe ſacred relicks
Beneath the altar.

[The great gate of the palace opens, Aſſur appears at a diſtance, ſurrounded with attendants and guards on every ſide.

Ha! the palace opens:
The courtiers crouding to the queen: behold
The haughty Aſſur with his ſervile throng
Of flatt'rers round him! O almighty pow'r!
On whom doſt thou beſtow thy bounties here?
O monſter!

ARSACES.

Ha! what mean'ſt thou?

OROES.

Fare thee well:
When night ſhall caſt her ſable mantle o'er
Theſe guilty walls, I'll have more converſe with thee,
Before the gods: revere them my Arſaces,
For know, brave youth, their eyes are fix'd on thee.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

ARSACES, MITRANES, in the front of the ſtage, ASSUR, CEDAR, with attendants, on one ſide.

ARSACES.

His words are dreadful; they affright my ſoul:
What horrid crimes! and what a court is here!
How little known! my royal maſter poiſon'd,
And Aſſur, but too well I ſee, ſuſpected!

MITRANES.

Aſſur is ſprung of royal race, and claims
The def'rence due to his authority:
He is the fav'rite of Semiramis,
And thou, without a bluſh, may'ſt pay him homage.

ARSACES.

Homage to him!

ASSUR.

[To Cedar.

Ha! do my eyes deceive me,
Or is Arſaces here without my order?
Amazing inſolence!

ARSACES.

What haughtineſs!

ASSUR.

[advancing.

Come hither, youth: what new engagements here
Have brought you from the camp?

ARSACES.

My duty, Sir,
And the queen's orders.

ASSUR.

Did the queen ſend for you?

ARSACES.

She did.

ASSUR.

But, know you not, with her commands
You ſhou'd have aſk'd for mine?

ARSACES.

I know not that,
And ſhou'd have thought the honour of her crown
Debas'd by ſuch a mean ſubmiſſion to thee:
My lord, you muſt forgive a ſoldier's roughneſs,
We are bad courtiers: bred up in the plains
Of Arbazan and Scythia, I have ſerv'd
Your court, but am not much acquainted with it.

ASSUR.

Age, time, and place, perhaps may teach you, Sir.
What wou'd you with the queen? for know, young man,
Aſſur alone can lead you to her preſence.

ARSACES.

I come to aſk my valour's beſt reward,
The honour ſtill to ſerve her.

ASSUR.

ASSUR.

Thou want'ſt more,
Preſumptuous boy! I know thy bold pretences
To Azema, but that thou woud'ſt conceal.

ARSACES.

Yes: I adore that lovely maid: her heart
Wou'd I prefer to empire: my reſpect,
My tend'reſt love—

ASSUR.

No more: thou know'ſt not whom
Thou art inſulting thus: what! join the race
Of a Sarmatian to the demi-gods
Of Tigris and Euphrates! mark me well:
In pity to thy youth I wou'd adviſe thee
Ne'er, on thy peril, to Semiramis
Impart thy inſolent requeſt; for know,
Raſh boy, if thou ſhou'd'ſt dare to violate
The rights of Aſſur, 'twill not paſs unpuniſh'd.

ARSACES.

I'll go this inſtant: thou haſt giv'n me courage:
Thus threat'nings always terrify Arſaces:
Thou haſt no right, whate'er thy pow'r may be,
T'affront a ſoldier who has ſerv'd his queen,
The ſtate, and thee: perhaps my warmth offends;

But thou art raſher than myſelf, to think
That I wou'd bend beneath thy ſervile yoke,
Or tremble at thy pow'r.

ASSUR.

Perhaps thou may'ſt:
I'll teach thee what a ſubject may expect
For inſolence like this.

ARSACES.

We both may learn it.

SCENE V.

SEMIRAMIS at the further end of the ſtage, leaning on her women.

OTANES, ASSUR, ARSACES, MITRANES, in the front.

OTANES, [advancing.

My lord, the queen at preſent wou'd be private:
You muſt retire, and give her ſorrows way:
Withdraw, ye gods, the hand of vengeance from her!

ARSACES.

How I lament her fate!

ASSUR. [To one of his attendants.

Let us begone,
And ſtudy how we beſt may turn her griefs
To our advantage.

[Semiramis comes forward, and is join'd by Otanes.

OTANES.

OTANES.

* My royal miſtreſs, be yourſelf again,
And wake once more to joy and happineſs.

SEMIRAMIS.

O death! when wilt thou come with friendly ſhade
To cloſe theſe eyes that hate the light of day?
Be ſhut, ye caves; horrible phantom, hence!
Strike if thou wilt, but threaten me no more.
Otanes, is Arſaces come?

OTANES.

E'er morn
Roſe on the temple, madam, he was there.

SEMIRAMIS.

That dreadful voice, from heav'n or hell I know not,
Which in the dead of night ſo ſhakes my ſoul,
Told me, my ſorrows, when Arſaces came,
Wou'd ſoon be o'er.

OTANES.

Rely then on the gods,
And let the chearful ray of hope diſpel
This melancholy.

* The beginning of this ſcene ſeems awkwardly conducted. Aſſur, Arſaces, and Mitranes, come in only to go out again: it wou'd, I think, have commenc'd much more properly with this ſpeech of Otanes.

SEMIRAMIS.

Is Arſaces here?
Methinks, when I but hear his name, my ſoul
Is leſs diſturb'd, and guilt ſits lighter on me!

OTANES.

O! quit, for ever quit the ſad remembrance:
Let the bright days of great Semiramis,
Replete with glory, blot one moment out
That broke the chain of thy ill-fated nuptials:
Had Ninus driv'n thee from his throne and bed,
All Babylon with thee had been deſtroy'd;
But happily for us, and for mankind,
That wanted ſuch diſtinguiſh'd virtues, you
Prevented him; and fifteen years of toil,
Spent in the ſervice of thy country, lands
Deſart and waſte made fertile by thy care,
The ſavage tamed, and yielding to the laws,
The uſeful arts, obedient to thy voice,
Upriſing ſtill, the glorious monuments
Of wealth and pow'r, the wonder of mankind,
And the loud plaudit of a grateful people,
All plead thy cauſe before the throne of heav'n;
But if impartial juſtice hold the ſcale,
If vengeance is requir'd for Ninus' death,

Why thus ſhou'd Aſſur brave the angry gods,
And live in peace? He was more guilty far
Than thou wert, yet the ruthleſs hand that pour'd
The fatal draught ne'er ſhakes with fear: he feels
No ſtings of conſcience, no remorſe affrights him.

SEMIRAMIS.

Our duties diff'rent, diff'rent is our fate:
Where ties are ſacred, crimes are heavier far:
I was his wife, Otanes, and I ſtand
Without excuſe; my conſcience is my judge
And my accuſer: but I hoped the gods,
Offended at my crimes, had puniſh'd me
Enough, when they depriv'd me of my child;
Hoped my ſucceſsful toils, that made the earth
Reſpect my name, had ſooth'd the wrath of heav'n:
But months on months have paſs'd in agony
Since this dire ſpectre hath appall'd my ſoul:
My eyes for ever ſee him, and my ears
Still hear his cries: I get me to the tomb,
But dare not enter: trembling I revere
His aſhes, and invoke his honour'd ſhade,
Which only anſwers me in diſmal groans.
Some dread event is nigh: perhaps the time
Is come *to expiate the* offence.

OTANES.

But think'ſt thou
The ſpirit of thy lord hath left indeed
The manſions of the dead, and ſtalks abroad?
Ofttimes the ſoul, by pow'rful fancy led,
Starts at a phantom of its own creation;
Still it beholds the objects it has made,
And ev'ry thing we fear is preſent to us.

SEMIRAMIS.

O no! it was not the wild dream of fancy
By ſlumber wrought, I ſaw him but too well:
The ſtranger ſleep had long withheld from me
His ſweet deluſions; watchful as I ſtood,
And muſed on my unhappy fate, a voice
Cloſe to my bed, methought, cry'd out, Arſaces!
The name reviv'd me: well thou know'ſt, long time
Aſſur has pierc'd this heart with deadly grief:
I ſhudder at his preſence, and the bluſhes
That ſhew my guilt increaſe my puniſhment,
Hate the reproachful witneſs of my ſhame,
And wiſh I cou'd — but wherefore ſhou'd I add
To crimes like mine freſh guilt? I ſought Arſaces
To puniſh Aſſur, and the thought of him
Awhile reliev'd me! but in the ſweet moment
Of conſolation, ſudden ſtood before me

That miniſter of death, all bath'd in blood,
And in his hand a falchion: ſtill I ſee,
Still hear him: comes he to defend, or puniſh?
'Twas at that very hour Arſaces came.
This day was fix'd by heav'n to end my ſorrows,
But peace is yet a ſtranger to my ſoul,
And hope is loſt in horror and deſpair:
The load of life is grown too heavy for me,
My throne is hateful, and my glories paſt
But add freſh weight to my calamities.
Long time I've hid my ſorrows from the world
And bluſh'd in ſecret, fearful to conſult
That rev'rend ſage whom Babylon adores:
I wou'd not thus degrade the majeſty
Of ſov'reign pow'r, or let Semiramis
Betray her fears before a mortal's eye,
But I have ſent to Libya's ſands in ſecret
There to conſult the oracle of Jove:
As if remov'd from man, the God of truth
Had hid in deſart plains his will divine.
Alas! Otanes, that dread pow'r which dwells
Within theſe lonely walls, hath long receiv'd
My fears and adorations; at his altars
My gifts were offer'd, and my incenſe roſe;
But gifts and incenſe never can atone

For crimes like mine: to-day I ſhall receive
Anſwers from Memphis.

SCENE VI.

SEMIRAMIS, OTANES, MITRANES.

MITRANES.

An Egyptian prieſt
Is at the palace gate, and begs admittance.

SEMIRAMIS.

Then will my woes be ended, or complete.
Let us be gone, and hide from Babylon
Her queen's diſgraceful ſorrows: let Arſaces
Be ſent to me: ſoon may his preſence calm
This ſtorm of grief, and ſooth my troubled ſoul!

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II. SCENE I.

ARSACES, AZEMA.

AZEMA.

TO thee, Arſaces, this great empire owes
Its luſtre, I my liberty and life.
When vanquiſh'd Scythia, thirſting for revenge,

From its wild defart ruſh'd indignant forth,
And bore down all before it; when my father,
Oppreſs'd by numbers, fell, and left me there
A hapleſs ſlave; then, arm'd with thunder, thou,
Piercing their dark retreats, didſt break my chains,
And give me ample vengeance on my foes.
Thou wert my great deliverer, Arſaces,
And in return I give thee all my heart;
I will be thine, and only thine; but O!
Our fatal paſſion will deſtroy us both:
Thy gen'rous heart, too open and ſincere,
Believ'd that gallant deeds, and fair renown
In arms, wou'd gain thee honours in a court;
And, fearleſs of ſucceſs, thou bring'ſt with thee
A hero's fierceneſs and a lover's heart.
Aſſur's incens'd: alas! thou doſt not know him:
He is too pow'rful for us; he rules all
At Babylon; and much, I fear, abuſes
His fatal influence o'er Semiramis:
He is thy great inexorable—rival.

ARSACES.

Ha! does he love thee?

AZEMA.

No: that ſavage mind,
Subtle and dark, a foe to ev'ry virtue,

Inſenſib

Inſenſible to love and ev'ry charm
But thoſe ambition boaſts, cou'd never feel
A real paſſion for me: but he knows
That Azema 's deſcended from the race
Of our Aſſyrian kings, and ſoon may claim
My right of empire here, as next the throne;
And therefore means to blend his int'reſt here
With mine, and gain the ſceptre for himſelf:
But if the youth whom Ninus had decreed,
Ev'n from my infant years, to be my huſband,
The ſon of great Semiramis, and heir
Of Babylon, were living now, and here
Wou'd offer me his heart and half his empire,
By love I ſwear, and by thy precious ſelf,
Ninias ſhou'd ſue in vain, and ſee me quit
A throne with him for baniſhment with thee.
Ev'n Scythia's bleak inhoſpitable plains
Wou'd yield a ſweet aſylum to our loves;
For they wou'd eccho my Arſaces' name,
And ſound his praiſe: thoſe barren wilds, where fi
Our paſſion grew, wou'd be to me a court,
Nor ſhou'd I caſt a thought on Babylon.
But much I fear this ſubtle ſtateſman means
To carry his reſentment further ſtill:
I've ſearch'd his ſoul, and know the blackneſs of it

Or I miſtake, or guilt ſits lightly on him;
Already he is jealous of thy glory,
He fears, and hates thee.

ARSACES.

And I hate him more,
But fear him not, ſince Azema is mine:
Keep thou thy faith, and I deſpiſe his anger.
At leaſt I ſhare with him the royal favor:
I ſaw the queen, and her humanity
Equal'd the pride of Aſſur: when I fell
Proſtrate before her, gently ſhe uprais'd me,
And call'd me the ſupport of Babylon:
With pride I heard the flatt'ring voice of her
Whoſe name the ſurrounding kings unite to honour:
The diſtance 'twixt her royal ſtate and mine
Was leſſen'd ſoon by mildeſt condeſcenſion;
It touch'd, it melted me; and, after thee,
To me ſhe ſeem'd, of all the human race,
Moſt nearly to reſemble the divine.

AZEMA.

If ſhe protects us, Aſſur's threats are vain;
I heed them not.

ARSACES.

Inſpir'd by thee, I went,
Fearleſs and brave, to lay before the feet

Of my great miſtreſs, that aſpiring paſſion
Which Aſſur dreads, and Azema approves;
When lo, that very moment came a prieſt
From Ægypt with Ammonian Jove's decree:
Trembling ſhe open'd quick the awful ſcroll,
Firſt fix'd her eyes on me, then ſudden turn'd
Her face aſide, and wept: ſtood fix'd in grief
Like one diſtraught, then ſigh'd, and vaniſh'd from me.
They tell me, ſhe is fall'n into deſpair,
And hath of late been dreadfully purſued
By ſome avenging god: I pity her:
'Tis wonderful, that after fifteen y[illegible]
Heav'n, that ſo long defended, ſh[illegible] laſt
Oppreſs her thus: by what hath ſhe offended
The angry gods, and wherefore are they chang'd?

AZEMA.

We hear of nought but dreadful ſpectres, omens,
And vengeance from above: the queen of late
Lets looſe the reins of empire: we had cauſe
To fear for Babylon, leaſt ſubtle Aſſur,
Who knows her weakneſs, in this dang'rous time,
Shou'd ſeize the helm, and bury all in ruin:
But the queen came, and all was calm again;

All own'd the pow'r of her deſpotic ſway.
If I have any knowledge of the court,
The queen hates Aſſur, but keeps fair with him,
And watches cloſe: they're fearful of each other,
Wou'd quarrel ſoon, but that ſome ſecret cauſe,
Some mutual int'reſt, ſtill prevents a rupture:
I ſaw her fire indignant at his name;
The bluſhes on her cheeks betray'd her thoughts,
And her heart ſeem'd to glow with deep reſentment:
But ſudden changes happen in a court;
Return, and ſpeak to her.

ARSACES.

I will; but know not
Whether again I e'er ſhall gain admittance.

AZEMA.

Thou haſt my vows, my wiſhes, and my pray'rs
For thy ſucceſs: I glory in my love,
And in my duty: let Semiramis
Rule o'er the vanquiſh'd Eaſt, I envy her
Nor fame nor conqueſt; let the world be hers,
Arſaces mine: but Aſſur comes this way.

ARSACES.

The traitor! how I ſhudder at his preſence!
My ſoul abhors him.

SCENE

SCENE II.

ASSUR, ARSACES, AZEMA.

ASSUR.

Your reception, Sir,
I find, was noble, ſuch as kings have oft
Sollicited in vain: you ſaw the queen
In ſecret, did ſhe not reprove a conduct
Injurious to my honour and her own?
Did ſhe not tell thee Azema's deſign'd
For Aſſur, not for thee? Long ſince her hand
To Ninias giv'n was for the blood of kings
Alone reſerv'd; and therefore is my right,
As next to the throne: did ſhe acquaint you, Sir,
Into what fatal ſnares your pride wou'd lead you,
That neither fame nor honours will excuſe
Your bold pretenſions?

ARSACES.

I well know what's due
To your high birth, and to the rank you bear,
And ſhou'd have paid it, tho' you had not thus
Inſtructed me; but as a maſter here
I own you not: your royal anceſtors,
From Belus ſprung, perhaps may give you claim
To Azema; the welfare of the ſtate,

Pre

'reſent and future, all, I own, conſpire
To raiſe your hopes of bliſs, and make her yours:
Theſe are your claims, and I acknowledge them:
But I have one that's worth 'em all: I love her:
might have added this, that I reveng'd
And ſav'd her, gave new luſtre to the throne
Which ſhe was born to fill, if I had choſen,
Like thee, to boaſt of my exploits before her.
But I muſt leave thee, to perform her orders,
Semiramis and her I ſhall obey,
And them alone: a day perhaps may come
When thou ſhalt be our maſter: heav'n ſometimes
In anger ſends us kings: but thou'rt deceiv'd,
At leaſt in one of thy ambitious views,
If 'mongſt thy ſubjects thou haſt rank'd Arſaces.

ASSUR.

The meaſure's full: thou court'ſt thy own deſtruction.

SCENE III.

ASSUR, AZEMA.

I've borne his inſolence too long already,
'Tis time we enter on a nobler ſubject,
And worthier thy attention.

AZEMA.

AZEMA.

Can there be one?
But ſpeak.

ASSUR.

E'er long all Aſia ſhall attend
On our reſolves, and low concerns like theſe
Muſt paſs unheeded by: a world demands
Our mutual care: Semiramis is now
The ſhadow of herſelf, her glory's paſt,
That ſtar which ſhone with ſuch tranſcendent luſtre,
Declining now, ſends forth a feeble ray;
The people ſee and wonder at her fall,
Whilſt ev'ry tongue demands a —— ſucceſſor:
That word ſufficeth: you well know my right:
'Tis not for love to deal forth ſov'reign pow'r,
And point out who ſhall rule in Babylon;
Not that my ſoul, to beauty blind, wou'd make
A virtue of inſenſibility;
But I ſhou'd bluſh for thee and for myſelf,
To ſee the welfare of a nation thus
Dependant on a ſigh: thoughts worthier both
Muſt guide my fortune, and determine thine:
Our anceſtors the ſame, we ſhou'd offend
Their venerable ſhades, and loſe the world
By not uniting: I aſtoniſh you:

Theſe

hese are harsh words for tender age like thine;
ut I address me to the kings and heroes
rom whom you sprung, to all those demi-gods
Vhom here you represent: too long trod down
eneath a woman's feet their ashes lay,
heir glories she eclips'd, usurp'd their pow'r,
nd fetter'd vanquish'd nations with her laws;
ut she is gone, and thou must now support
he building she had rais'd: she had thy beauty,
nd thou must have her courage: let not love
r folly wrest the sceptre from thy hand,
ut grasp it close: you will not sacrifice
o a Sarmatian's idle passion for you
he name you ought to honour, and the throne
ou shou'd ascend of universal empire.

AZEMA.

et not Arsaces be the theme, my lord,
f your reproaches, but depend on me
o vindicate the honour of my race,
nd to defend, whene'er occasion calls,
he rights of my lov'd ancestors; I know
heir worth and virtues, but I know not one
nongst the heroes which Assyria boasts
ore great, more virtuous, more belov'd, than him,
han *this Sarmatian*, whom you thus disdain.

Do

Do juſtice to his merit: for myſelf,
When I ſhall bend to Hymen's laws, the queen
Muſt guide my choice, and at her hands alone
Will I receive a maſter: for the croud,
The babbling eccho of one ſecret voice,
I heed it not; nor know I if the people
Are tir'd of their obedience to a woman,
But ſtill I ſee them bow the knee before her;
And if they murmur, murmur in the duſt:
The hand of heav'n, they ſay, is rais'd againſt her:
I am a ſtranger to her guilt, but think
That heav'n wou'd never have made choice of thee
To tell its high commands, or miniſter
Its juſtice to mankind: Semiramis
Is ſtill a queen, and you who lord it here
Receive from her the laws which you diſpenſe:
For me, I own her pow'r, and her's alone:
My glory's to obey, be thine the ſame.

SCENE IV.

ASSUR, CEDAR.

Obey! I bluſh to think how long already
I have obey'd: O inſupportable!
But ſay, haſt thou ſucceeded, are the ſeeds
Of hatred ſown in ſecret thro' the realm?

Will they ſpring up into a fruitful harveſt
Of diſcord, and rebellion?

CEDAR.

All is well:
The people, long deluded by the arts
And dazzling glory of Semiramis,
At length have loſt their idle veneration:
No longer chain'd to ſilence, they demand
A ſucceſſor: each lover of his country
Calls for a maſter, and looks up to thee.

ASSUR.

Heart-burning care! and ever-during ſhame!
Still muſt my hopes, my fate depend on her?
Was it for this that Ninus and his ſon
Fell by my hand, that Aſſur might be ſtill
Only her firſt of ſlaves? So near the throne,
To languiſh in illuſtrious ſervitude,
And only be the ſecond of mankind!
The queen was ſatisfy'd with Ninus' death,
But I went further, and purſued my blow:
Ninias, in ſecret murther'd by my order,
Open'd my paſſage to the throne; but ſhe
Deny'd me entrance.—A long time in vain
I ſooth'd her *pride with* flatt'ry on her charms;

Still

Still hoped one day to gain upon her youth
That happy influence which aſſiduous care
And humble adoration ſeldom fail
To win o'er artleſs minds that bend with eaſe:
I little knew the firmneſs of her ſoul,
Inflexible, and bold; the world alone
Cou'd ſatisfy her pride: ſhe ſeem'd indeed
Moſt worthy of it: ſpite of my reſentment,
I own ſhe was, and yield the praiſe ſhe merits.
The reins of empire, that flow'd looſe before,
Strongly ſhe held; appeas'd the murm'ring croud,
Silenc'd their plaints, and quaſh'd conſpiring rebels;
Fought like a hero, like a monarch rul'd:
She led her army and her people captive,
And ſpite of fame, with more than magic art,
Chain'd down the minds of men: the univerſe
Aſtoniſh'd ſtood, and trembled at her feet.
I ſhort, her beauty, woman's beſt ſupport,
Strengthen'd the laws which pow'r and valour made;
And when I ſtrove to raiſe conſpiracies
My friends ſtood mute, and only cou'd admire her.
At length the charm is broke: her pow'r decays;
Her genius droops; remorſe, and idle fears,
And fond credulity have bound her faith
To lying oracles, which knaviſh prieſts

Had taught to ſpeak in Ægypt's barren plain:
She pours her daily incenſe at their altars,
And wearies heav'n with vows: Semiramis
Creeps on a level now with common mortals,
And condeſcends to fear: I know her weakneſs:
Know, till ſhe falls, Aſſur can never riſe:
But I have rais'd the people's voice againſt her,
And ſhe muſt yield: this blow decides her fate:
If ſhe conſents to give me Azema,
She is no longer queen; if ſhe refuſes,
The kingdom will revolt: on every ſide
The ſnare is laid, and nothing now can ſave her.
Yet, after all, perhaps I am deceiv'd,
And fortune, ſo long call'd for, comes at laſt
But to betray me.

CEDAR.

If the queen is forc'd
To name a ſucceſſor, and yield the princeſs
To Aſſur's bed, what can he have to fear,
When the divided branch of Aſia's kings
Shall be united? all conſpires to pave
Your way to empire.

ASSUR.

Azema is ſafe;
She muſt be mine; but wherefore ſend ſo far
For this Arſaces? ſhe ſupports him too;

And when I wou'd chaſtiſe his inſolence,
Her interpoſing hand prevents me ſtill:
A miniſter without the pow'r, a prince
Without a ſubject, girt around with honours,
And yet a poor dependant, what is Aſſur?
All, all unite to perſecute me now:
A peeviſh miſtreſs, and a haughty rival,
Conſulted prieſts that teach their gods to ſpeak
Againſt me; with Semiramis, who ſtrives
To free herſelf, yet trembles at my preſence:
But we ſhall ſee how far this proud ingrate
Will urge an angry rebel who defies her.

SCENE V.

ASSUR, OTANES, CEDAR.

OTANES.

My lord, the queen commands you to attend her
In ſecret, and alone.

ASSUR.

I ſhall obey
Her ſacred orders, and with care perform
My ſov'reign's will.

SCENE VI.

ASSUR, CEDAR.

ASSUR.

Whence ſprings this ſudden change?
Theſe three months paſt ſhe has avoided me,
Ev'n as the object of her hatred: oft
When ſhe beheld me ſhe wou'd caſt her eyes
Down on the earth, as if ſhe loath'd the ſight:
Whene'er we met, 'twas in a gaping croud
Of hearers; when ſhe ſpoke, her ſighs and tears
Wou'd interrupt our converſe, or perchance
Silence was all the anſwer ſhe wou'd give me.
What can ſhe want? What can ſhe ſay to me?
But here ſhe comes: 'tis ſhe—wait you within.

[to Cedar.

SCENE VII.

SEMIRAMIS, ASSUR.

SEMIRAMIS.

My lord, I come to eaſe a troubled heart
Of its long hidden woes, and pour it all
Before you: I have ruled o'er Aſia long,
And not inglorious: Babylon perhaps
May pay this tribute to my memory,
And ſay, Semiramis deſerv'd to rank

Among the greateſt of her kings: thy hands
Have help'd me to ſupport the weight of empire;
With abſolute dominion have I ruled,
Ador'd by all, and crown'd with victory
On ev'ry ſide: intoxicated long
With flatt'ry's pleaſing incenſe, I forgot
The crimes that rais'd me to this envy'd ſtate;
Forgot the juſtice of high heav'n: it comes;
It ſpeaks to me: Semiramis muſt yield:
This noble ſtructure, which I fondly thought
Superior to the injuries of time,
Is tott'ring now, and ſhakes from its foundation;
Means muſt be found to ſtrengthen and ſupport it.

ASSUR.

The work is yours, and you muſt finiſh it:
Foreſee th'attacks of time, and ſtop his rapine:
Who ſhall obſcure the luſtre of thy days,
Or wherefore fear'ſt thou heav'n whilſt earth obeys thee?

SEMIRAMIS.

Yonder the aſhes of my huſband lie;
Can'ſt thou look there, and wonder at my fears?

ASSUR.

I cannot bear to hear the noiſy croud
Still talk of Ninus: wherefore ſhou'd remembrance

Call

Call back the thoughts of that inglorious reign?
Can they believe, that, after fifteen years,
His angry ſpirit ſtill calls out for juſtice?
E'er now he wou'd have ta'en due vengeance on us,
Had he the pow'r: why from the peaceful realms
Of dark oblivion woud'ſt thou call the dead,
Or ſearch for truth in lying oracles?
I am aſtoniſh'd too, but 'tis at thee,
And thy vain fears: to make the gods propitious,
We muſt be reſolute: this idle phantom,
At once the child and parent of your fears,
Why ſhou'd it thus alarm you? Prodigies
Never appear to thoſe who dread them not:
Baits to allure th' unthinking multitude,
By knaves invented, and by fools believ'd;
The great deſpiſe them: but if nobler views
Inſpire thy ſoul t'immortalize the blood
Of Belus, if the beauteous Azema
Claims her high rank. ——

SEMIRAMIS.

Aſſur, on that I came
To ſpeak with thee: our Babylon demands,
For ſuch is Ammon's will, a ſucceſſor:
Heav'n and my people will be ſatisfy'd

When I ſhall take a partner to my throne:
Thou know'ſt, my pride cou'd never condeſcend
To a divided ſway; 'twas my reſolve
To rule alone, whilſt the impatient world
Urg'd me in vain; and when the peoples voice,
Which now is eccho'd by the voice of heav'n,
Still preſs'd me, in the bloom of youth, to give
A ſov'reign to mankind, I ſtill refus'd:
If I had yielded then to any claim,
It had been thine; you had a right to hope,
And to expect it; but you knew too well,
How much Semiramis abhorr'd a maſter.
Without ſubmitting to a tie ſo fatal,
I made thee then the ſecond of mankind,
And only not my equal; 'twas enough,
I thought, to ſatisfy ev'n thy ambition.
At length the gods make known their will divine,
And I obey them: hear the oracle:
" All ſhall again be well at Babylon,
" When Hymen's torch a ſecond time ſhall blaze
" Propitious; then ſhalt thou, O cruel wife,
" And wretched mother, then ſhall thou appeaſe
" The ſhade of Ninus." Thus the voice of heav'n
Declares its ſacred will: I know thy arts,
Know, thou haſt form'd a party in the ſtate,

And

And mean t'oppoſe me with the royal blood
From whence you ſprung: from thee and Azema
My ſucceſſor, it ſeems, muſt riſe; I know
You look that way, and ſhe perhaps aſpires
To equal honours; but, obſerve me well:
I ſhall not ſuffer your united claims
To rob me of my right: remember, Sir,
You know my will; 'tis conſtant, and as fate
Irrevocable: think'ſt thou now the God
Whoſe arm is lifted o'er me hath depriv'd
My ſoul of all its wanted ſtrength and ſpirit,
Or doſt thou ſtill behold Semiramis,
Who can ſupport the honour of her throne?
Know, Babylon e'er long ſhall at my hands
Receive a maſter: whether the high choice
Shall fall on thee, or be another's lot,
I'll take a ſov'reign as a ſov'reign ought:
Bring me the magi and the princes here
To join their voices with Semiramis.
To give away my freedom and my empire
Is the firſt greateſt act of royal pow'r,
And therefore let it be perform'd with awe
And ſilence due to my authority.
Heav'n hath appointed this great day to ſhew
Its mercy to me, and the gods at length

Remit their anger; nothing can disarm it
But my repentance; 'tis the only virtue:
Trust me, it is, howe'er you may despise it,
Remaining for the guilty: weak, I know,
And fearful thou esteem'st me; but henceforth
Remember, Assur, guilt alone is weakness:
Think not that fear can e'er disgrace a throne,
It has done good to kings, and might to thee:
I tell thee, statesman, to obey the gods,
* And tremble at their pow'r, is no abasement.

SCENE VIII.

ASSUR alone.

Astonishment! such language, such designs!
Or is it artifice, or weakness in her,
Or cowardice or courage? Does she mean,
By yielding thus, to prop her tott'ring pow'r,
And by our union to defeat my purpose?
I must not think, it seems, of Azema,

* The enormous length of this speech, is a sufficient proof of what Mr. Voltaire has advanc'd in the preface, viz. that most of the French tragedies are nothing but long discourses: this consists of no less than sixty-four lines, and is enough to tire the pipe of the most long-winded actor. Semiramis, however, has beauties, which few of them have, to make amends for the tediousness of declamation, which in other writers, and even sometimes in Voltaire, is insupportable.

Because

Becauſe, perhaps, I'm deſtin'd for herſelf.
It muſt be ſo. What all my cares in vain
Solicited, my flatt'ry of her charms,
My deep intrigues, and our united crimes,
With all her fears, cou'd never gain, at length
An idle dream, and a dark oracle
From Ægypt have perform'd. What pow'r unknown
Decrees the fate of mortals? Great events
Hang on the ſlend'reſt thread: ſtill I am doubtful:
I'll ſee Semiramis again; ſhe ſeem'd
Too much in haſte; ſuch ſudden reſolutions
Betray an over anxious mind, and thoſe
Who change with eaſe are either weak, or wicked.

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

SEMIRAMIS, OTANES.

The ſcene repreſents an apartment in the palace.

SEMIRAMIS.

Who wou'd have thought, Otanes, that the gods,
Offended as they were, at length ſhou'd ſmile
Propitious thus, and threaten but to ſave!
Shou'd drop th'uplifted thunder from their hand,
And pardon me; ſhou'd ſend Arſaces hither

To change my fate! for know it is their will
That I ſhou'd wed, and by a ſecond tie
Expiate the crimes of my firſt fatal nuptials.
They are the great diſpoſers of our hearts,
And mine with pleaſure yields to their decrees:
It ev'n outruns their purpoſes: Arſaces,
I'm thine; for thou wert born to rule o'er me,
And o'er the world.

OTANES.

Arſaces! he!

SEMIRAMIS.

Thou know'ſt,
In Scythia's plains, when I reveng'd the Perſian,
And conquer'd Aſia, this young hero fought
Beneath his father's banners, and, ſurrounded
With captives, brought to me the bloody ſpoils,
And, bluſhing, laid his victims at my feet.
When firſt I ſaw him, I cou'd feel his heart,
As by ſome ſecret pow'r, attracting mine
Inſenſibly towards him; all mankind,
Beſide Arſaces, ſeem'd not worth my notice.
Aſſur grew jealous of him, and e'er ſince
Has fir'd with indignation at his name;
Whilſt his dear image ſtill employ'd my thoughts,
Before that voice which guides my ev'ry word

And ev'ry action named him for my huſband,
Before the gods had pointed out Arſaces.

OTANES.

It was indeed a noble conqueſt, thus
To bend that haughty ſpirit which diſdain'd
The proffer'd homage of our eaſtern monarchs,
Who as her ſubjects, not as lovers, ſtill
Accepted kings! You who contemn'd thoſe charms,
That ſov'reign beauty, which extended wide
Your univerſal empire; whilſt your eyes
Pierc'd ev'ry heart, you ſcarce wou'd condeſcend
To mark their pow'r; and doſt thou yield at laſt
To love's imperious ſway; to fears and horror
Succeed the tender paſſions? Can it be?

SEMIRAMIS.

O, no: it is not love: I am not fall'n
So much beneath myſelf, as to beſtow
On beauty the reward that's due to virtue;
I feel a nobler paſſion in my breaſt:
Alas! ſuch weakneſs wou'd but ill become
Semiramis: unhappy as I am,
For me to think of love, Otanes, how
Coud'ſt thou ſuppoſe it? Once I was a mother,
But ſcarce had ſtudy'd to deſerve the name
By my fond cares, when heav'n in anger ſnatch'd

My child away, and left me here alone
A prey to anguiſh. I had nothing near me
That I cou'd love; and, midſt my grandeur, felt
An aching void within my ſoul. I fled
The court, endeavour'd to avoid myſelf,
And ſought relief in theſe proud monuments,
Amuſing flatt'rers of a reſtleſs heart
That ſhunn'd reflection: reſt was ſtill a ſtranger,
And long remain'd ſo; but he comes once more,
I feel him now, and wonder at the pow'r
That charm'd him hither: 'twas Arſaces; he
Shall hold the place of huſband and of ſon,
A conquer'd world, and all my glories paſt.
How much I owe to thee, cœleſtial pow'r,
Who thus propitious lead'ſt me to the altar
So long abhorr'd; and haſt thyſelf inſpir'd
That paſſion which alone can make me happy!

OTANES.

But what will be the rage and grief of Aſſur?
Haſt thou reflected on it, when he hears
Thy new reſolves? He is not without hopes:
The people have already fix'd thy choice
On him, and his reſentment will not end
In mere complaints.

SEMI-

SEMIRAMIS.

I never have deceiv'd,
And therefore fear him not: theſe fifteen years,
Whate'er his views have been, I've taught him ſtill
To rank but with my ſubjects, tho' the firſt
Amongſt them; and ſet bounds to his ambition,
Which he hath ne'er o'erleap'd: I reign'd alone;
And if this feeble hand ſo long cou'd guide
The helm of pow'r, and curb his haughtineſs,
What can his courage or his cunning do
Againſt Arſaces and Semiramis?
Yes: Ninus hath accepted my repentance,
And leaves the manſions of the dead to urge
Our happy union: his illuſtrious ſhade
Again wou'd rage to ſee his murth'rer ſeize
His throne and bed: this calls him from the tomb,
And Ammon's oracles unite with him
To crown my bliſs: no more the awful virtue
Of Oroes affrights me; I've ſent for him
To be a witneſs of the great event,
And ſoon expect him here.

OTANES.

His honour'd name
And ſacred character may give indeed
A ſanction to your choice.

SEMIRAMIS.

I know it will,
And 'ſtabliſh my reſolves.

OTANES.

Behold, he comes.

SCENE II.

SEMARIMIS, OROES.

SEMIRAMIS.

Great ſucceſſor of Zoroaſtres, welcome:
To day muſt Babylon receive a king;
Thy office is to crown him; is all ready
For the ſolemnity?

OROES.

The magi wait
Thy pleaſure, and the nobles all attend:
To pay obedience to the ſov'reign pow'r.
Is all my duty, and I ſhall fulfill it:
I am not to judge kings, for that belongs
To heav'n alone.

SEMIRAMIS.

By this myſterious language,
It ſeems you diſapprove my purpoſe.

OROES.

Madam,
I know it not, but wiſh it fair ſucceſs.

SEMI-

SEMIRAMIS.

Thou can'ſt interpret heav'ns high will: theſe ſigns
Which I have ſeen, can they be fatal to me?
A ſpectre hath of late, perhaps ſome god,
Appear'd, and in the boſom of the earth
Re-enter'd ſoon: what pow'r hath thus broke down
Th' eternal barrier that divides the light
From darkneſs? wherefore ſhou'd a mortal thus
Riſe from the tomb to viſit me?

OROES.

Know, heav'n
Doth oft ſuſpend its own eternal laws
When juſtice bids, reverſing death's decree;
Thus to chaſtiſe the ſov'reigns of the earth,
And terrify mankind.

SEMIRAMIS.

The oracles
Demand a ſacrifice.

OROES.

It ſhall be offer'd.

SEMIRAMIS.

Eternal juſtice, thou whoſe piercing eye
Behold'ſt my naked heart, O fill it not
Again with horror, bury in oblivion
My firſt unhappy nuptials!

Oroes, ſtay.

[To Oroes, who is retiring.

OROES.

[returning.

I thought my preſence might diſturb you, Madam.

SEMIRAMIS.

Return, and anſwer me: this morning, ſay,
Did not Arſaces offer at your altars
Gifts to the gods?

OROES.

He did; and precious were they:
Arſaces is the favourite of heav'n.

SEMIRAMIS.

I know he is, and I rejoice to hear it.
Can I be wretched if I truſt to him?

OROES.

He is the empire's beſt ſupport; the gods
Conducted him; his glory is their care.

SEMIRAMIS.

With tranſport I accept the fair preſage,
Whilſt hope and peace return to calm my breaſt.
Away: again let pureſt incenſe riſe
Before your altars; let your magi come
And ſanctify the choice; bring down the ſmiles

Of

: the aſſenting gods, and make us happy.
nceforth may Babylon with me revive,
ıd ſhine amongſt the nations of the earth
'ith double ſplendor! Go thou, and prepare
he ſolemn pomp.

SCENE III.

SEMIRAMIS, OTANES.

SEMIRAMIS.

Heav'n ſeconds my deſign,
ıd I am only the interpreter
f its high will, to give the world a maſter:
hus to receive a kingdom at my hand
'ill ſtrike him with aſtoniſhment: ev'n now
ow little thinks he of th' approaching greatneſs!
ow will proud Aſſur and his fawning croud
: humbled! But a word, and the whole earth
ılls at his feet; and, grateful as he is,
know he will repay me: I ſhall wed him,
nd for my portion carry him a world;
[y glory's pure, and now I ſhall enjoy it.

SCENE IV.

SEMIRAMIS, OTANES, MITRANES.

An officer of the palace.

OTANES.

Arſaces begs admittance to your preſence,
To lay his ſorrows at your feet.

SEMIRAMIS.

Arſaces!
What ſorrows can Arſaces feel when I
Am near him, he who thus hath baniſh'd mine?
Quick, let him come: he knows not yet his pow'r
O'er the fond heart of his Semiramis:
O thou dread ſhade whoſe voice alarm'd my ſoul,
Whoſe blood no more calls out for vengeance on me,
And you, the guardian gods of this great empire,
Of the Aſſyrians, Ninus, and my ſon,
Unite to bleſs Arſaces! Ha! the ſight
Alarms me; whence can theſe ſtrange terrors riſe?

SCENE V.

SEMIRAMIS, ARSACES.

O queen, I am devoted to thy ſervice;
My life is thine; and when I ſhed this blood,
I am rewarded if it flows for thee.
My father had ſome ſmall renown in arms;

I ſaw him periſh bravely in the field,
And at the head of thy victorious bands;
He left his hapleſs ſon a fair example,
Perhaps but ill purſued: I'll not recall
The mem'ry of my father's ſervices,
'Twou'd ill become me; at your royal knees,
Tho' here I ſue for favor and protection:
Pity the raſhneſs of a guilty youth,
Who liſten'd to the dictates of imprudence,
And ev'n in ſerving fear'd he might offend you.

SEMIRAMIS.

Offend me! thou, Arſaces! fear it not.

ARSACES.

To day you give your kingdom and your hand:
My heart, I know, ſhou'd on the great event
Keep ſecret all its fears, and humbly ſtill
In ſilence, with depending monarchs, wait
To know our maſter; but this Aſſur ſteps
So haughtily, and triumphs in his conqueſt,
We cannot brook his pride: the people call him
Already their new ſov'reign; his high blood
And rank ſupport him: may he prove himſelf
Worthy of both! but I have ſtill a ſoul
Too proud to bend beneath him, or adore

The

The pow'r I had defy'd: his jealous heart
I know deteſts Arſaces: let me then
Retire in ſafety, far from him, and thee:
Permit me to reviſit the dear climes
Where firſt I ſerv'd my royal miſtreſs, there
His tyranny can never reach: perhaps
I may hereafter—

SEMIRAMIS.

Wilt thou leave me then,
And fear'ſt thou Aſſur?

ARSACES.

No: Arſaces fears
Nought but the anger of Semiramis.
Perhaps thou know'ſt my fond ambition, then
I've cauſe indeed to tremble.

SEMIRAMIS.

Hope the beſt,
And know that Aſſur ne'er ſhall be thy maſter.

ARSACES.

I own it ſhock'd my ſoul to look on him
As Ninus' ſucceſſor: but is he then
Deſign'd for Azema? forgive this bold
Preſumptuous queſtioner: long ſince I know
She was to Ninias giv'n, proud Aſſur ſprung

From the ſame race, and claims her as his own:
I am but a poor ſubject, yet I dare——

SEMIRAMIS.

Such ſubjects are my kingdom's beſt ſupport;
I know thee well; thy noble ſoul, ſuperior
To vulgar minds, hath ſought Semiramis,
Not for her fortunes, but herſelf; thy eyes
Are fix'd on her true int'reſt, and on thee,
I ſhall depend: Aſſur and Azema
Shall never meet; their union would be dang'rous:
But their deſigns are known, and by my care
Will be prevented.

ARSACES.

Since my heart at length
Is open to thee, and thou haſt diſcover'd——

AZEMA enters ſuddenly, and throws herſelf at the feet of Semiramis.

O Queen, permit me thus——

SEMIRAMIS.

Riſe, Azema:
Where'er my choice may light, thou may'ſt depend
On my protection, and ſhalt find reſpect
Due to thy birth; for, deſtin'd as thou wert
To be the wife of my lamented ſon,
I look upon thee with a mother's eye:

[To

[To them both.

Go, place yourſelves with thoſe whom I have call'd
To witneſs my reſolves, and mark my choice.

[To Arſaces.

Be thou, my beſt protector, near the throne.

SCENE VI.

The apartment of Semiramis opens into a magnificent ſaloon richly ornamented; a number of officers in their proper habits on the ſteps of the throne, which is rais'd in the middle; the ſatraps on each ſide: the high-prieſt enters with the magi, and places himſelf between Aſſur and Arſaces: the queen in the midſt with Azema, and her attendants: guards at the lower end of the ſaloon.

OROES.

Ye princes, magi, warriors, the ſupport
Of Babylon, aſſembled by command
From great Semiramis, the will of heav'n
Soon ſhall ye know: the gods that guard our empire
Have fix'd on this important hour to work
A great and mighty change; whoe'er the queen
Shall here appoint her ſov'reign and our own
It is our duty to obey; and here
I *bring my* tribute to the throne, my pray'rs

And

nd wiſhes for the glory and the welfare
f them, and of their kingdom: may theſe days
f joy and gladneſs ne'er be chang'd to hours
f grief and ſorrow, nor theſe ſongs of mirth
o mournful plaints!

AZEMA.

A king, my lords, will ſoon
e named; whoe'er he be, the choice will injure
lyſelf alone; but Azema was born
nd muſt remain a ſubject; I ſubmit
'o the queen's pleaſure, and on her protection
hall ſtill depend; nor with the dark preſage
)f future ills ſhall interrupt your joy:
ut leave you my example of obedience.

ASSUR.

lowe'er the queen may chooſe, and heav'n determine,
Ve muſt conſult the public good alone;
et us then ſwear by this imperial throne,
nd great Semiramis, to yield ſubmiſſive,
nd without murm'ring, to obey her will.

ARSACES.

ſwear it; and this arm that fought for her,
This heart obedient ever to her voice,
Which next the voice of heav'n I ſtill rever'd,

This

This blood which flow'd with pleaſure for her ſake,
Shall be devoted to that royal maſter
Whom ſhe appoints.

HIGH-PRIEST.

I wait the great award
Of heaven and Semiramis.

SEMIRAMIS.

Enough:
Each to his place, and now attend, my people.

(She ſeats herſelf on the throne.)

Azema, Aſſur, the High-Prieſt, and Arſaces take their places, and ſhe proceeds.

If in that hand which cuſtom and the laws
Of an imperious huſband had confin'd
To homely cares, and to a diſtaff chain'd,
I bore aloft the ſceptre and the ſword,
Beyond my ſubjects hope, nor ſunk beneath
The weight of empire, let me now extend
To lateſt times its glory: 'tis my purpoſe
This day to take a partner in the throne:
The gods muſt be obey'd, whoſe dread command
At length ſubdued my long unconquer'd heart:
They who depriv'd me of my ſon, perhaps
May one day raiſe an heir to Babylon
Worthy of empire, who ſhall follow me

Thro' all the thorny paths that I have trod,
Finiſh my work, and make my reign immortal.
I might have choſe a ſov'reign from the kings
That dwell around me, but they're all my foes,
Or tributary ſlaves: a foreign hand
Shall never wield this ſceptre: my own ſubjects
Are better than the kings which they have conquer'd:
Belus was born a ſubject; if he gain'd
The diadem, he ow'd it to the people,
And to himſelf: by rights like his I hold
The pow'r ſupreme; and, miſtreſs of a kingdom
Larger than his, have bent beneath my yoke
The nations of the Eaſt, which Belus ne'er
Had ſeen or heard of: what he but attempted
Semiramis perform'd; for they who found
A kingdom, and they only, can preſerve it.
You want a king who may be worthy of you,
Worthy of ſuch an empire, ſhall I add
Worthy the hand that crowns him, and the heart
Which I ſhall give: I have conſulted heav'n,
My country's weal, the int'reſt of mankind,
And chooſe a king to make the world more happy.
Adore the hero, ſee in him reviv'd
The princes of my honour'd race; obſerve him,

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And know, this king, this hero, is—Arſaces.

[She deſcends from the throne, and they all riſe.

AZEMA.

Arſaces! the perfidious ——

ASSUR.

Rage and vengeance!

ARSACES.

Believe me, Azema ——

OROES.

Juſt heav'n! avert
Theſe omens!

SEMIRAMIS.

Thou who ſanctify'ſt my choice,
Confirm it at the altar: ſee in him
Ninus and Ninias both reſtor'd.

[It thunders, and the tomb ſhakes.

O heav'n!
What do I hear?

OROES.

Great gods, protect us now!

SEMIRAMIS.

The thunder comes, in anger or in love
I know not: pardon, gracious gods! Arſaces
Muſt win them to forgiveneſs. Ha! what voice

Diſtracts

Diſtracts me thus? and ſee, the tomb is open.
O heav'n! I die.

[The ghoſt of Ninus comes out of the tomb.

ASSUR.

The ſhade of Ninus' ſelf.

Gods! is it poſſible?

ARSACES.

What ſay'ſt thou? ſpeak,
Thou god of terrors.

ASSUR.

O unfold thy tale.

SEMIRAMIS.

Com'ſt thou to pardon, or to puniſh me?
It is thy ſceptre and thy bed which here
I have beſtow'd: ſpeak, is he worthy of it?
Determine: I obey thee.

The GHOST of NINUS to ARSACES.

Thou ſhalt reign,
Arſaces, but there are ſome dreadful crimes
Which thou muſt expiate: hie thee to the tomb,
And to my aſhes offer ſacrifice:
Serve me and Ninias: remember well
Thy father: liſten to the pontiff.

ARSACES.

O!
Thou venerable ſhade, thou demi-god,
Who dwell'ſt within theſe walls, the ſight of thee
Inſpires but not aſtoniſhes Arſaces:
Yes, I will go, on peril of my life,
And meet thee in the tomb: but tell me, what
Muſt be the ſacrifice? O ſpeak! he's gone.

[The ghoſt retires towards the entrance of the mauſolæum.

SEMIRAMIS.

Thou honour'd ſpirit of my lord, permit me
Thus on my knees to pour my ſorrows forth,
Permit me in the tomb to ——

GHOST, at the entrance of the tomb.

Stop: no farther!
Reſpect my aſhes: when the time is come
I'll ſend for thee.

[The ghoſt goes into the tomb, and the mauſolæum cloſes.

ASSUR.

Amazing!

SEMIRAMIS.

Follow me,
My people, to the temple: be not thus
Diſmay'd: for know, the gentle ſhade of Ninus

Is

Is not implacable; it loves your king,
And therefore will it ſpare Semiramis:
Heav'n that inſpir'd my choice will now ſupport it:
Haſte then, and pray for me, and for Arſaces.

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Repreſenting the porch of the temple.

ARSACES, AZEMA.

ARSACES.

DO not oppreſs me in this hour of grief,
And aggravate my ſorrows; I have borne
Enough already: this dread oracle
Affrights me; prodigies on ev'ry ſide
Diſturb the courſe of nature: heav'n deprives me
Of all, if Azema is loſt.

AZEMA.

No more,
Falſe man, nor to the horrors of this day
Add the remembrance of thy perfidy;
No more the terrors of Semiramis,

The walking ſpectre, and the opening grave,
Appall me now; of all the prodigies
Which I have ſeen, thy baſe inconſtancy
Hath ſhock'd me moſt: go on, appeaſe the ſhade
Of Ninus, and begin the ſacrifice
With Azema; behold, and ſtrike the victim.

ARSACES.

It is too much; my heart was not prepar'd
Againſt this cruel ſtroke: thou know'ſt, my ſoul
Preſers thee to the empire of the world:
What was the object of that fame in arms
I held ſo dear, of all my victories?
All my ambition hoped for was at laſt
To merit thee: Semiramis, thou know'ſt,
Was dear to both; thy tongue unites with mine
To praiſe her; ſhe was ſtill the guardian god
That cheriſh'd and protected us; as ſuch
We both revered her with that pious zeal
And chaſte regard which mortals bear to heav'n:
Judge of my ſpotleſs faith by my ſurpriſe
At the queen's choice, and mark the precipice
It leads us to, thence learn our future fate.

AZEMA.

I know it.

ARSACES

ARSACES.

Learn, that neither thou nor empire
:re deſtin'd for Arſaces; know, that ſon
iom I muſt ſerve, the child of Ninus, he
io muſt inherit here——

AZEMA.

Well; what of him?

ARSACES.

at Ninias, he who from his cradle lit
e torch of Hymen with thee, who was born
' rival and my maſter——

AZEMA.

Ninias!

ARSACES.

Lives;
l will be with us ſoon.

AZEMA.

Ha! then the queen——

ARSACES.

n to this day deceiv'd, laments his death.

AZEMA.

iias alive!

ARSACES.

It is a ſecret yet
Within the temple, and ſhe knows it not.

AZEMA.

But Ninias crowns thee, and his widow's thine.

ARSACES.

Ay, but his ſon was born for Azema;
He is my king, ſo ſays the oracle,
And I muſt ſerve him.

AZEMA.

But love claims his own,
And will be heard in ſpite of all, Arſaces:
His orders are not doubtful, or obſcure.
Love is my oracle, and that alone
Shall be obey'd. Ninias, thou ſay'ſt, yet lives,
Let him appear, and let Semiramis
Recall her plighted faith to him; let Ninus
Riſe from the tomb, to join the fatal knot
Made in our infant years; let Ninias come,
My king, thy maſter, and thy rival, fired
With all the love which once Arſaces had
For Azema, then ſee how I will ſlight
His proffer'd vows; then ſhalt thou ſee me ſcorn

The ſceptre at my feet, and ſpurn a crown
Which is my due: where is he now? What ſecret,
What myſt'ry veils him from us? Let him come;
But know, nor Ninias, nor Semiramis,
No, nor the ſacred ſpirit of his father
Ris'n from the tomb, nor all the pow'rs of nature
Thrown in confuſion, from my heart ſhou'd wreſt
The image of my perjur'd dear Arſaces:
Go, aſk thy own, if it will dare to act
As mine hath done. What are thoſe dreadful crimes
Which thou muſt expiate? if thou e'er ſhou'dſt break
The ſacred tye that binds us, if thou'rt falſe,
I know no crime, no treach'ry like thy own.
I ſee the ſage interpreter of fate
This way advancing; love will never plead
Thy cauſe with heav'n, if thou betray'ſt me: go,
From Ninus' hand receive thy doom; remember,
Thy fate depends on heav'n, and mine on thee.

[Exit Azema.

ARSACES.

Arſaces ſtill is thine: ſtay, cruel maid:
How mingled is our happineſs and woe!
What ſtrange events that contradict each other ——

SCENE II.

ARSACES, OROES, the magi attending.

OROES. [To Arſaces.

Let us retire to yonder lonely walk;
I ſee you are much mov'd: prepare yourſelf
For ſtrokes more dreadful.

[To the magi.

Bring the royal wreath.

[The magi bring the coffer.

This letter, and this ſacred ſword, to thee,
Arſaces, I deliver.

ARSACES.

Rev'rend father,
Wilt thou not ſave me from the precipice
That gapes before me? wilt thou not at length
Uplift the veil, that from my eyes conceals
My future fate?

OROES.

'Twill be remov'd, my ſon;
The hour is come, when in his dreary manſions,
Ninus from thee expects a ſacrifice
That ſhall appeaſe his angry ſpirit.

ARSACES.

What
Can Ninus aſk, what ſacrifice from me?

Muſt

Muſt I be his avenger, when his ſon
Still lives? Let Ninias come; he is my king,
And I will ſerve him.

OROES.

'Tis his father's will,
Thou muſt obey him: an hour hence, Arſaces,
Be at his tomb, arm'd with this ſacred ſword,
And with this wreath adorn'd, which Ninus wore,
And which thy ſelf did bring to me.

ARSACES.

The wreath
Of Ninus!

OROES.

'Tis his royal will that thus
Thou ſhoud'ſt appear, to offer up the blood
That muſt be ſhed; the victim will be there:
Strike thou, and leave the reſt to him, and heav'n.

ARSACES.

If he requires my life, I'll give it him:
But where is Ninias? thou ſpeak'ſt nought of him:
Thou haſt not told me how his father gives
To me his kingdom and his queen.

OROES.

To thee
His queen! O heav'n, to thee Semiramis

Be giv'n! Arſaces, the important hour
Which I had promis'd thee is come, when thou
Shalt know thy fate, and this abandon'd woman.

ARSACES.

Great gods!

OROES.

'Twas ſhe who murther'd Ninus.

ARSACES.

She,
Saidſt thou, the queen?

OROES.

Aſſur, that foul diſgrace
Of human nature, Aſſur gave the poiſon.

ARSACES.

I'm not ſurpris'd at Aſſur's cruelty,
But that a wife, a queen, and ſuch a queen,
The pride of ſov'reigns, the delight of nations,
That ſhe ſhou'd e'er be guilty of a crime
So horrible! it paſſes all belief.
How can ſuch virtues and ſuch guilt as hers
Subſiſt together!

OROES.

How indeed! the queſtion
Is worthy of thy noble heart: but now

'Twere

'Twere needleſs to diſſemble, ev'ry moment
Is big with ſome new ſecret, horrible
To nature, who already whiſpers to thee
Her ſoft complaints; thy gen'rous heart, I ſee,
Spite of thyſelf, is ſhock'd, and mourns within thee!
But wonder not that Ninus from the tomb
Indignant riſes on this ſeat of guilt;
He comes to break the horrid nuptial tie,
Wov'n by the furies, and expoſe to light
Unpuniſh'd crimes; to ſave his ſon from inceſt:
He ſpeaks to, he expects thee: know thy father,
For thou art Ninias, and the queen's thy mother.

ARSACES.

Thou haſt o'er pow'rd me in one dreadful moment
With ſuch repeated wonders, that I ſtand
Aſtoniſh'd, and the night of death ſurrounds me.
Am I his ſon, and can it be?

OROES.

Thou art:
Ninus, the morn before he dy'd, foreſaw
His end approaching; knew the deadly draught
Which he had drank was miniſter'd to thee
By the ſame hand, and, dying as thou wert,
Withdrew thee from this wicked court: for Aſſur
Had poiſon'd thee that he might wed thy mother,

Thought

Thought to exterminate the royal race,
And open thus his paſſage to the throne:
But whilſt the kingdom mourn'd thy loſs, Phradates,
Our faithful friend, ſecreted and preſerv'd thee;
With ſkilful hand the precious herbs prepar'd,
O'er Perſia ſpred by her benignant God,
Whoſe wond'rous pow'r drew forth the latent venom
From thy parch'd limbs: his own ſon dying, you
Supply'd his place, and ſtill wert call'd Arſaces.
He waited patient for ſome lucky change,
But the great judge of kings had otherwiſe:
Determin'd; truth at length deſcends from heav'n,
And vengeance riſes from the tomb.

ARSACES.

O God!
Enough already haſt thou try'd thy ſervant,
Or muſt I yield that life which you reſtor'd?
Yes: I was born midſt grandeur, ſhame, and horror:
My mother — Ninus! O what deadly purpoſe —
But if the traitor Aſſur was alone
To blame, if he ———

ORGES. [Giving him the letter.

Behold this paper here,
Too faithful witneſs of her guilt, then ſay
If yet a doubt remains.

ARSACES.

ARSACES.

Haſte, give it me,
And clear them all. [He reads.
Ha! "*Ninus to Phradates:*
"*I die by poiſon, guard my Ninias well,*
"*Defend him from his foes: my guilty wife*——

OROES.

Need'ſt thou more proof? this witneſs came from thee.
He had not finiſh'd; death, thou ſee'ſt, broke off
Th'imperfect ſcroll, and ſtopp'd his feeble hand;
Phradates hath unfolded all the reſt,
Read this, and learn the whole.
[Gives him another paper.
It is enough
That Ninus hath commanded thee, he guides
Thy ſteps, and leads thee to the throne, but ſays
He muſt have blood.

ARSACES. [after reading the paper.

O day of miracles,
And you ye dreadful oracles from hell,
Dark as the tomb which I muſt viſit, how

Shall

Shall I unveil your ſecret purpoſes,
When he who is to make the ſacrifice
Knows not his victim! Who ſhall guide my choice?
I tremble at it.

ORŒS.

Tremble for the guilty.
Amidſt the horrors that oppreſs thy ſoul,
The gods will guide thee; deem not thou thyſelf
A common mortal, from the race of men
Thou art diſtinguiſh'd, ſet apart by heav'n,
And noted by its ſignature divine.
Walk thou ſecure, tho' night conceals thy fate,
The gods of thy great anceſtors employ thee
But as their inſtrument, what right haſt thou
To litigate their pow'r, and to oppoſe
Thy maſters? Sav'd from death, as thou haſt been,
Be thankful ſtill; complain not, but adore.

SCENE III.

ARSACES, MITRANES.

ARSACES.

I cannot reconcile this ſtrange event:
Semiramis my mother! can it be?

MITRANES.

MITRANES. [entering in haſte.

My lord, the people in this hour of terror
Demand their king: permit me firſt to hail thee
The huſband of Semiramis, and lord
Of Babylon: the queen is haſting hither
In ſearch of thee; I bleſs the happy hour
That gave her to thee: ha! not anſwer me!
Deſpair is in thy looks, thy lips are clos'd
In dreadful ſilence, thou art pale with terror,
And thy whole frame's diſorder'd: what has paſs'd?
What have they ſaid?

ARSACES.

I'll fly to Azema.

MITRANES.

Amazing! can it be Arſaces? fly
A queen's embraces; ſcorn her proffer'd love;
Inſult her choice; the royal hand that ſpurn'd
Kings for thy ſake! thus are her hopes betray'd?

ARSACES.

Gods! 'tis Semiramis herſelf; O Ninus,
Now let thy tomb in its dark boſom hide
Her crimes, and me!

SCENE

SCENE IV.

SEMIRAMIS, ARSACES.

SEMIRAMIS.

Arſaces, all is ready,
We want but thee, great maſter of the world,
Whoſe fate, like mine, depends on thee; O haſte,
And make our bliſs complete! with joy I ſee
Thy brows encircled with that ſacred wreath:
The prieſt, I know, was by the gods commanded
To crown thee with it; heav'n and hell at once
Approve my choice, and by theſe ſigns confirm it:
Aſſur's ſeditious party, ſtruck with awe
And holy rev'rence, tremble at my preſence;
Ninus, at length propitious, hath requir'd
A ſacrifice, O haſte, and give it him,
That we may ſoon be bleſt: the people's hearts
Are all with us, and Aſſur's threats are vain.

ARSACES.

[walking about with great emotion.

Aſſur! away! in his perfidious blood
The parricide—we will revenge thee, Ninus.

SEMIRAMIS.

What do I hear? juſt heav'n! ſpeak'ſt thou of him,
Of Ninus?

ARSACES.

ARSACES. [wildly.

Said'ſt thou not, his guilty hand
(coming to himſelf.)
Had ſhed—to arm againſt his queen! the ſlave,
That was enough to make me hate him.

SEMIRAMIS.

Haſte then,
Receive my hand, and thus begin thy vengeance.

ARSACES.

My father!

SEMIRAMIS.

Ha! what looks are thoſe, Arſaces?
Is this the ſoft ſubmiſſive tender heart
Which I expected from thee, when I gave
My willing hand? That fearful prodigies,
And ſpectres riſing from their dark domain,
Shou'd leave the marks of horror on thy ſoul,
Alarms me not, I feel them too, but leſs
When I behold Arſaces: do not thus
O'erſpread this faireſt dawn of happineſs
With ſorrow's gloomy ſhade, but ſtill appear
Such as thou wert when trembling at my feet,
Leaſt Aſſur e'er ſhou'd be thy maſter; fear
Nor him, nor Ninus and his angry ſhade;

My dear Arſaces, thou art my ſupport,
My lord, my huſband.

ARSACES.

[turning aſide from her.

'Tis too much, O ſtop:
Her guilt o'erwhelms me.

SEMIRAMIS.

How his ſoul's diſturb'd!
Alas! he wants that peace which he beſtow'd
On me.

ARSACES.

Semiramis ——

SEMIRAMIS.

What woud'ſt thou? ſpeak.

ARSACES.

I cannot: leave me, leave me: hence! begone.

SEMIRAMIS.

Amazing! leave thee! can I e'er forſake
Arſaces? O explain this myſt'ry to me,
And eaſe my tortur'd ſoul: it makes us both
Unhappy:— ha! deſpair is in thy aſpect;
Thou chill'ſt my veins with horror, and thy eyes
Are dreadful; they affright me more than heav'n
And hell united to oppoſe my vows:
Scarce can my trembling lips pronounce, I love thee:

Some

Some pow'r inviſible now leads me on
Towards thee, now withholds me from thy arms,
And mingles, how I know not, fond'reſt love
With ſentiments of horror and deſpair.

ARSACES.

Hate me, abhor me.

SEMIRAMIS.

Can'ſt thou bid me hate thee?
Cruel Arſaces, No: I ſtill muſt trace
Thy footſteps, ſtill my heart muſt follow thine:
What is that paper which thou look'ſt on thus
With horror, whilſt thy eyes are bath'd in tears,
Does that contain a reaſon for thy coldneſs?

ARSACES.

It does.

SEMIRAMIS.

Then give it me.

ARSACES.

I muſt not: dar'ſt thou—

SEMIRAMIS.

I'll have it.

ARSACES.

Leave to me that dreadful ſcroll,
To thee 'twere fatal, I have uſe for it.

SEMIRAMIS.

Whence came it?

ARSACES.

ARSACES.

From the gods.

SEMIRAMIS.

And wrote by whom?

ARSACES.

Wrote by my father.

SEMIRAMIS.

Ha! what ſay'ſt thou?

ARSACES.

Tremble.

SEMIRAMIS.

Give it me, let me know at once my fate.

ARSACES.

Urge it no more; there's death in ev'ry line.

SEMIRAMIS.

No matter: clear my doubts, or I ſhall think
That thou art guilty.

ARSACES.

Ye immortal pow'rs
That guide our ſteps, it is to your decrees
That I ſubmit.

SEMIRAMIS.

For the laſt time, Arſaces,
I here command thee, liſten, and obey.

ARSACES.

ARSACES, [giving her the letter.

O may thy juſtice, heav'n, be ſatisfy'd!
And this the only puniſhment that e'er
Shall be inflicted on her! now 'tis paſt,
And thou wilt know too much.

[She reads.

SEMIRAMIS. [to Otanes.

What do I read?
Support me, or I die.

[She faints.

ARSACES.

She ſees it all.

SEMIRAMIS, [coming to herſelf, after a long ſilence.

Delay not, but fulfil thy deſtiny:
Puniſh this guilty, this unhappy wretch,
And in my blood waſh out the deadly ſtain.
Nature deceiv'd is horrible to both,
Revenge thy father, ſtrike, and puniſh me.

ARSACES.

No: let the ſacred character I bear,
The name of ſon, preſerve me from that crime!
Much rather wou'd I pierce the heart of him
Who ſtill reveres thee, the poor loſt Arſaces.

SEMIRAMIS. [kneeling.

Be cruel as Semiramis, ſhe felt
No pity, therefore be the ſon of Ninus,
And take my life: thou wilt not; nay, thy tears

Ev'n

Ev'n mix with mine: O Ninias, 'tis a day
Of horrors, yet there's pleaſure in this pain.
Before thou giv'ſt me what I have deſerv'd,
The ſtroke of death, let nature's voice be heard:
O let a guilty mother's tears bedew
That dear that fatal hand.

ARSACES.

I am thy ſon,
'Tis not for thee, whate'er thy guilt, to fall
Thus at my feet: O riſe, thy Ninias begs,
He loves thee ſtill, ſtill vows obedience to thee,
Reſpect and pureſt love: conſider me
As a new ſubject, only more ſubmiſſive,
More humble, than the reſt; I hope, more dear.
Heav'n that reſtores thy ſon is ſure appeas'd:
The gods who pardon thee reſerve their vengeance
For Aſſur, leave him to his fate.

SEMIRAMIS.

Receive
My crown and ſceptre, I have much diſgrac'd them.

ARSACES.

Still, I beſeech you, hold me ignorant
Of all, and let me with the world adore you.

SEMI-

SEMIRAMIS.

O no: my guilt's too flagrant.

ARSACES.

But repentance
May blot it out.

SEMIRAMIS.

Ninus hath giv'n to thee
The reins of empire, thou muſt not offend
His vengeful ſpirit.

ARSACES.

O it will relent
At thy remorſe, and ſoften at my tears.
Otanes, in the name of heav'n, preſerve
My mother, and conceal the horrid ſecret.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT V. SCENE I.

SEMIRAMIS, OTANES.

OTANES.

O 'Twas ſome god that ſmil'd propitious on thee,
Who thus prevented theſe abhorred nuptials;
Whilſt nature ſhudder'd at th' approaching danger,
Gave thee a ſon, and ſav'd thee thus from inceſt.

The oracles of Ammon, and the voice
From hell, the ſhades of Ninus, all declar'd
The day appointed for thy ſecond marriage
Shou'd end thy ſorrows, but they never ſaid
That marriage e'er ſhou'd be accompliſh'd: No:
The nuptials were prepar'd: thou haſt fulfill'd
Thy deſtiny: thy ſon reveres thee ſtill:
Mild is the juſtice of offended heav'n,
Which only aſks a private ſacrifice:
This day Semiramis ſhall ſtill be happy.

SEMIRAMIS.

Alas! there is no happineſs for me,
Otanes: Ninias ſmiles indeed upon me:
A mother's ſorrows for a time will plead
More ſtrongly with him than the blood of Ninus,
And my paſt crimes; but ſoon his tenderneſs
And filial love may change perhaps to wrath
And fierce reſentment for a murther'd father.

OTANES.

What fear'ſt thou from a ſon? what dire preſage—

SEMIRAMIS.

Fear is the nat'ral puniſhment of guilt,
And ſtill attends it: this deteſted Aſſur,
Has he attempted aught, ſay, does he know
What paſs'd of late, and who Arſaces is?

OROES.

OTANES.

The dreadful ſecret ſtill remains unknown;
The ſhade of Ninus is by all rever'd;
But how to comprehend the oracle
They know not; how they muſt avenge his aſhes;
How ſerve his ſon—the minds of men are ſtruck
With wild aſtoniſhment, in ſilence now
They wait the hour when the ſelf-open'd tomb
Shall baniſh all their fears, and make 'em happy.
Mean time the ſoldiers are in arms, the people
Croud to the altars; wretched Azema,
Trembling and pale, with terror in her looks,
Walks round the tomb, and lifts her hands to heav'n;
Whilſt Ninias ſtands aſtoniſh'd in the temple,
Prepar'd to ſtrike his victim yet unknown:
The gloomy Aſſur meditates revenge,
Unites the remnants of his ſcatter'd party,
And forms ſome dark deſign.

SEMIRAMIS.

I have kept fair
Too long already with him: ſeize the traitor,
Otanes, bear him to my ſon in chains;
Ninias ſhall ſoon appeaſe eternal juſtice,

At leaſt with Aſſur's blood, my vile accomplice.
Ninus, thou ſee'ſt I am a mother ſtill;
Thou ſee'ſt my heart, O take it, take it all,
And may it riſe a grateful ſacrifice!
Ha! who approaches with ſuch haſty ſteps?
How ev'ry thing appalls my flutt'ring ſoul!

SCENE II.

SEMIRAMIS, AZEMA, OTANES.

AZEMA.

O Queen, forgive me if I come uncall'd;
But terrors worſe than death have forc'd me thus
To claſp thy knees, and beg thy royal mercy—

SEMIRAMIS.

What woud'ſt thou, princeſs? ſpeak.

AZEMA.

To ſnatch a hero
From inſtant danger, ſtop a traitor's hand,
And ſave Arſaces.

SEMIRAMIS.

Ha! what hand? Arſaces!

AZEMA.

He is thy huſband, Azema's betray'd,
He lives for you alone; no matter—

SEMIRAMIS.

He
My huſband! gods!

AZEMA.

AZEMA.

The ſacred tie that binds you—

SEMIRAMIS.

The tie is dreadful, impious, and abhorr'd:
Arſaces is—but ſpeak, go on; I tremble:
What dangers? haſte, and tell me.

AZEMA.

Well thou know'ſt,
Perhaps this very moment, whilſt I aſk
Thy aid, perhaps—

SEMIRAMIS.

Well, what?

AZEMA

That demi-god
Whom we adore demands the ſacrifice
Within the dreary lab'rinths of the tomb:
What are the crimes Arſaces muſt atone for
I know not.

SEMIRAMIS.

Crimes! juſt heavn!

AZEMA.

But impious Aſſur
Hath ſworn to violate that ſacred place
Which mortals dare not enter.

SEMIRAMIS.

Ay! indeed!
Hath Aſſur ſworn it?

AZEMA.

In the dead of night
The wily traitor had long ſince ſecur'd
A ſafe retreat, if e'er occaſion call'd,
Within the ſecret windings of the tomb,
Where now he means to do the bloody deed,
To brave the pow'rs of hell, and wrath of heav'n;
With ſacrilegious hand he wou'd deſtroy
The generous Arſaces.

SEMIRAMIS.

Heav'n! what ſay'ſt thou?
By what deteſted means?

AZEMA.

Believe a heart
By love enlighten'd, and by love inſpir'd:
I know the traitor's rank envenom'd hatred,
Mark'd how the trembling faction by his zeal
Reviv'd; I pry'd into their ſecret councils,
Pretended to unite his cauſe with mine,
And join our int'reſts; I have look'd into him,
Have wreſted from his heart the fatal ſecret.
Boldly he marches on, and hopes to paſs
Unpuniſh'd: well he knows that none dare enter
That holy place, not Oroes himſelf:
Thither he's gone: mean time his ſlaves report
Arſaces is the victim that muſt die

To

For Babylon, and Ninus in his blood
Shall ſatiate his revenge: the nobles meet,
The people murmur; Ninus, Aſſur, heav'n,
Are all incens'd: I tremble for Arſaces.

SEMIRAMIS.

My deareſt Azema, heav'n ſpeaks by thee:
'Tis enough: I ſee what muſt be done.
Repoſe thyſelf with ſafety on a mother;
Daughter, our danger is the ſame; go thou,
Defend thy huſband, I will ſave my ſon.

AZEMA.

O heav'n!

SEMIRAMIS.

I meant to wed him, but the gods
In mercy have forbad it: they inſpire
A hapleſs mother now: — but time is precious;
Go: leave me here, and in my name command
The nobles, prieſts, and people, to attend me.

[Azema goes into the porch of the temple, and Semiramis advances towards the tomb.

Thou ſhade of Ninus, lo! I fly t'avenge thee;
The hour is come when thou didſt promiſe me
Admittance to thy tomb; I have obey'd thee,
Call'd by thy voice, behold me here to ſave
My ſon. Ye guards that wait around my throne

Approach: henceforth Arſaces is your king;
No more obedient to Semiramis,
Obſerve his laws, to him the ſov'reign pow'r
I here reſign; be you his ſubjects now,
And his defenders.

[Guards appear, and range themſelves on each ſide at the further part of the ſtage.

Gracious heav'n! protect me.

[She goes into the tomb.

SCENE III.

AZEMA.

[returning from the porch of the temple to the front of the ſtage.

What can ſhe purpoſe? O it is too late
To ſave him now; I know not what to think:
'Tis wond'rous all; O 'tis a dreadful moment,
Arſaces! Ninias! ye immortal pow'rs
Who guide our fate, O ſay, did you reſtore
My lov'd Arſaces but to ſnatch him from me?

SCENE IV.

AZEMA, NINIAS.

AZEMA.

Ha! Ninias! can it be? Art thou indeed
Great Ninus' ſon, my ſov'reign, and my huſband?

O

NINIAS.

thou behold'ſt me, Azema, aſham'd
know myſelf, ſprung from the blood of gods,
l ſhudd'ring at the thought: O! Azema,
nove my terrors, calm my troubled ſoul,
ngthen my arm uprais'd t'avenge a father.

AZEMA.

ce heed how thou perform'ſt that dreadful office.

NINIAS.

hath commanded, and I muſt obey.

AZEMA.

ius wou'd never ſacrifice his ſon:
oſſible!

NINIAS.

What ſays my Azema?

AZEMA.

er ſhalt thou enter that abhorred place,
know, a traitor lies in wait for thee.

NINIAS.

o ſhall withhold or terrify Arſaces?

AZEMA.

ou art the victim to be offer'd there:
h ſacrilegious ſteps the impious Aſſur

Profanes the ſacred tomb, and raſhly dares
To violate its privilege divine:
He waits thee there.

NINIAS.

Good heav'n! then all is plain;
I'm ſatisfy'd: the victim is prepar'd;
My father, poiſon'd by the wicked Aſſur,
Demands the traitor's blood: inſtructed thus
By Oroes, and conducted by the gods,
Arm'd by the hand of Ninus' ſelf, I go
To puniſh the Aſſaſſin: thither led
By heav'ns eternal juſtice, my weak hand
Is but the inſtrument of pow'r divine:
The gods do all, and my aſtoniſh'd ſoul
Yields to that voice which muſt decree my fate:
Spite of ourſelves, our ways are noted down,
Mark'd, and determin'd: prodigies are ſpred
Around the throne, and ſpirits call'd from hell
To wander here: but fearleſs I obey,
Believe, and truſt in heav'n.

AZEMA.

Whate'er the gods
Have done but fills my ſoul with ſad diſmay:
Ninus was lov'd by them; yet Ninus periſh'd.

NINIAS.

NINIAS.

t now they will avenge him: ceaſe thy plaints.

AZEMA.

t have they choſe the pureſt victim, oft
ve ſhed the blood of innocence.

NINIAS.

No more;
ıey will defend whom thus they have united:
ey by a father's voice exhorted us,
ve me a throne, a mother, and a wife.
ın ſhalt thou ſee me ſprinkled with the blood
the vile murth'rer; from the tomb thoſe gods
ıll lead me to the altar; I obey;
s enough: the reſt be left to heav'n.

SCENE. V.

AZEMA alone.

guard his footſteps in this fatal tomb!
pow'rs inſcrutable, whoſe blood muſt flow
is day? I tremble for th'event, and dread
e hand of Aſſur, long inur'd to ſlaughter;
n on his father's aſhes may he ſhed
e blood of Ninias: O may the dark womb
hell receive and ſwallow up his rage!
light'nings blaſt him! O illuſtrious ſhade

Of Ninus, wherefore wou'd'ſt thou not permit
A wretched wife to go with her dear lord?
O guide, ſupport him in this place of darkneſs!
Did I not hear the voice of Ninias mix'd
With deadly groans? O wou'd this ſacred tomb,
Which I profane, but open to my wiſhes
The gate of death! — I will deſcend: — I go —
Hark! the earth ſhakes, and dreadful light'nings flash
Athwart the ſkies: fear, hope, deſpair — he comes.

SCENE VI.

NINIAS, a bloody ſword in his hand, AZEMA.

NINIAS.

O heav'n! Where am I?

AZEMA.

O! my lord, you're pale,
And bloody, froz'n with horror.

NINIAS.

'Tis the blood
Of the vile parricide: I wander'd down
Ev'n to the bottom of the tomb; my father
Still led me onward thro' its winding paths,
He walk'd before, and pointed out the place
Of my revenge: there, by th' imperfect light
That glimmer'd thro' the dreary vault, I ſaw,

Or

Or thought I ſaw, uprais'd, the murth'rers ſword:
Methought he trembled; guilt is ever fearful:
Twice did I plunge my ſword into his heart,
And with my bloody arm, which rage had ſtrengthen'd,
Had drag'd him in the duſt towards the place
Whence the dim rays of light appear'd: and yet
I own to thee, his deep heart-rending ſighs,
The mournful ſounds, imperfect as they were,
That reach'd my ears, his humble vows to heav'n,
With that repentance which in his laſt hour
Seem'd to poſſeſs his ſoul, the hallow'd place,
The voice of pity, which, revenge once o'er,
Calls loudly on us, with I know not what
Of dark myſterious terror, ſhook my ſoul,
And made me leave the bleeding victim there.
What can this trouble, this ſtrange horror mean
That dwells upon me, Azema? My heart
Is pure, ye gods, my hands are innocent,
Stain'd only with the blood you bid me ſhed;
I've ſerv'd the cauſe of heav'n, and yet am wretched.

AZEMA.

The dead are ſatisfy'd, and nature too:
Come let us quit this horrid place, and ſeek
Thy mother, ſhe ſhall calm thy troubled mind:
Since Aſſur is no more ——

SCENE

SCENE VII.

NINIAS, AZEMA, ASSUR.

[Aſſur appears at a diſtance with Otanes, ſurrounded by guards.

AZEMA.

O heav'n! he's there.

NINIAS.

Aſſur!

AZEMA.

O haſte, ye miniſters of heav'n,
Ye ſervants of the king, defend your maſter.

SCENE VIII.

OROES, the high-prieſt, with the magi and people aſſembled. OTANES, NINIAS, AZEMA, MITRANES, ASSUR diſarm'd.

OTANES.

They need not: by the queen's command I've ſeiz'd
The traitor, who attempted to profane
Yon ſacred monument, and enter there:
I ſhall deliver him to thee.

NINIAS.

Alas!
What victim then hath Ninias ſacrific'd?

OROES.

OROES.

Heav'n is appeas'd, and vengeance now complete.
Behold, ye people, your king's murtherer.

[pointing to Ass

Behold, ye people, your king's ſucceſſor.

[pointing to Nin

'Tis Ninias, Babylon's loſt prince, reſtor'd:
He is your ſov'reign, know him, and obey.

ASSUR.

Thou Ninias!

OROES.

Ay; 'tis he: the guardian god,
Who ſav'd him from thy rage, hath brought him hith
That god whoſe vengeance hath o'ertaken thee.

ASSUR.

Ha! did Semiramis then give thee life?

NINIAS.

She did, and pow'r withal to puniſh thee:
Guards take him hence, and rid me of a monſter.
He was not worthy of my ſword; to fall
By Ninia's hand had been a death too glorious.
The victim hath eſcap'd me; let him die,
Ev'n as he liv'd, with infamy: away.

ASSUR.

It is my heavieſt puniſhment to ſee
Ninias my ſovreign: but 'tis pleaſure ſtill

To leave thee more unhappy than myſelf;

[Semiramis appears at the foot of the tomb, wounded, and almoſt dead, one of the magi ſupporting her.

Look yonder, and behold what thou haſt done.

[pointing to Semiramis.

NINIAS.

Whom have I ſlain?

AZEMA.

Fly, my dear Ninias, fly
This fatal place.

MITRANES.

What haſt thou done?

OROES.

[placing himſelf between Ninias and the tomb.

Away;
And cleanſe thoſe bloody hands: give me the ſword,
That fatal inſtrument of wrath divine.

NINIAS.

No: let me plunge it to my heart.

[He attempts to deſtroy himſelf, the guards interpoſe.

OROES.

Diſarm him.

SEMIRAMIS.

[Brought forward and ſeated on a ſofa.

Revenge me, O my ſon: ſome baſe Aſſaſſin
Has ſlain thy mother.

Has

NINIAS.

O unhappy hour;
Unheard of guilt! for know, that baſe aſſaſſin,
That monſter was — thy ſon: this hand hath pierc'd
The breaſt that nouriſh'd and ſupported me:
But ſoon thou ſhalt have vengeance, Ninias ſoon
Shall follow thee.

SEMIRAMIS.

I went into the tomb
To ſave thee, Ninias; thy unhappy mother —
But from thy hands I have receiv'd the fate
I merited.

NINIAS.

This laſt, this fatal ſtroke,
Sinks deep into my ſoul: but here I call
Thoſe gods to witneſs who conducted me,
Thoſe who miſled my ſteps —

SEMIRAMIS.

No more, my ſon:
Freely I pardon thee, and only make
This laſt requeſt, that thoſe dear hands may cloſe
My dying eyes.

[He kneels.

A mother begs it of thee:
Thy heart I know was ſtranger to the deed:

O wou'd that I had been as innocent
When Ninus dy'd! but I have ſuffer'd for it.
Henceforth let mortals know, that there are crimes
Offended heaven never can forgive.
O Ninias, Azema, let your bleſt union
Blot out my crimes; come near your dying mother;
Give me your hands; long may ye live and reign
In happineſs! that hope ſtill gives me comfort,
And mingles joy ev'n with the pangs of death.
It comes, I feel it. O! my children, think
On your Semiramis, O do not hate
My mem'ry, — O my ſon, my ſon — tis paſt.

OROES.

Her eyes are ſunk in darkneſs: help the king
And guard his life. Learn from her ſad example,
That heav'n is witneſs to our ſecret crimes:
The higher is the criminal, remember,
The gods inflict the greater puniſhment;
Kings, tremble on your thrones, and fear their juſtice.

END of the FIFTH and laſt ACT.

THE

DEATH

OF

CÆSAR.

A

TRAGEDY.

A

LETTER

FROM

SIGNOR ALGAROTTI,

TO

SIGNOR FRANCHINI,

ENVOY at FLORENCE.

On the TRAGEDY of JULIUS CÆSAR, by Mr. DE VOLTAIRE.

SIR,

I Have deferr'd ſending you the Julius Cæſar, which you deſir'd, till now, that I might have the pleaſure of communicating to you the tragedy on that ſubject, as written by Mr. de Voltaire. The edition of it printed at Paris ſome months ago, is extremely faulty; one may eaſily perceive in it the hand of ſome of thoſe gentlemen, whom Petronius calls Doctores Umbratici. It is even ſo ſhamefully defective, as to give us verſes that have not the proper number of ſyl-

lables.

lables. This piece, notwithſtanding, has been as ſe-verely criticis'd, as if Mr. de Voltaire himſelf had publiſh'd it: wou'd it not be cruelly unjuſt to impute to Titian, the bad colouring of one of his pictures, that had been dawb'd over by a modern painter? I have been fortunate enough to procure a manuſcript fit to be ſent to you: you will ſee the picture exactly as it came out of the hand of the maſter: I will even venture to accompany it with the remarks which you deſired of me.

Not to know that there is a French language and a French theatre, cannot ſhew a greater degree of ignorance, than not to know to what perfection Corneille and Racine carry'd the drama. It ſeem'd, indeed, as if, after theſe great men, nothing remain'd to be wiſh'd for, and that all which cou'd be done, was to endeavour to imitate them. Cou'd one expect any thing in painting after the Galatæa of Raphael? and yet the famous head of Michael Angelo, in the little Farneſe, gave us an idea of a ſpecies more fierce and terrible, to which this art might be raiſed. In the fine arts, we do not perceive the void till after it is fill'd up. Moſt of the tragedies of the great maſters I juſt now mention'd, whether the ſcene lies at Rome, Athens,

or Conſtantinople, contain nothing more than a marriage concerted, or broken off: we can expect, indeed, nothing better in this ſpecies of tragedy, wherein love makes peace or war with a ſmile. I cannot help thinking but that the drama is capable of ſomething infinitely ſuperior to this. Julius Cæſar is to me a proof of it. The author of the tender Zara breaths nothing here but ſentiments of ambition, liberty, and revenge.

Tragedy ſhou'd be an imitation of great men; it is that which diſtinguiſhes it from comedy: but if the actions which it repreſents are likewiſe great, the diſtinction is ſtill better mark'd out, and by theſe means we may arrive at a nobler ſpecies. Do we not admire Mark Antony more at Philippi than at Actium? I am apprehenſive, notwithſtanding, that reaſonings of this kind will meet with the ſtrongeſt oppoſition. We muſt have very little acquaintance with human nature not to know, that prejudice generally gets the better of reaſon; and above all, thoſe prejudices that are authoris'd by a ſex that impoſes laws upon us, which we always ſubmit to with pleaſure.

Love has been too long in poſſeſſion of the French threatre, to ſuffer any other paſſions to ſupplant it, which inclines me to think, that Julius Cæſar will

meet

meet with the fate of Themiſtocles, Alcibiades, and many other great men of Athens, that of being admir'd by all mankind; whilſt Oſtraciſm baniſh'd them from their own country.

In ſome places Mr. de Voltaire has imitated Shakeſpear, an Engliſh poet, who united in the ſame piece the moſt childiſh abſurdities and the fineſt ſtrokes of the true ſublime. He has made the ſame uſe of him as Virgil did of Ennius, and taken from him the two laſt ſcenes, which are, doubtleſs, the fineſt models of eloquence which the ſtage ever produced.

Quum flueret lutulentus, erat quod tollere velles.

What is it but the remains of barbariſm in Europe, to endeavour to make thoſe bounds which power and policy have preſcribed to ſeparate ſtates and kingdoms, the limits alſo of ſcience, and the fine arts, whoſe progreſs might be ſo widely extended by that commerce and mutual light which they wou'd throw on each other: a reflection which may be more ſerviceable to the French nation than any other, as it is exactly in the caſe of an author, from whom the public expect more in proportion to what they have already received from him. France is ſo highly poliſh'd and cultivated, that we have a right to demand of her,

not

not only that ſhe ſhou'd approve, but that ſhe ſhou'd adopt and enrich herſelf with every thing that is excellent amongſt her neighbours:

Tros Rutuluſve fuat, nullo diſcrimine habeto.

There is one objection to this tragedy, which I ſhou'd not have mentioned to you, but that I heard it made by many, that it has but three acts: this, ſay the critics, is againſt all the rules of the ſtage, which require that there ſhou'd be exactly five. It is certainly one of the firſt rules of the drama, that the repreſentation ſhou'd not take up more time than the real action. They have therefore very rationally limited that time to three hours, becauſe a longer wou'd weary the attention; and, at the ſame time, wou'd prevent our uniting in the ſame point of view, the different circumſtances of the action. Upon this principle, we have divided the play into five acts, for the conveniency of the ſpectators, and of the author alſo, who has leiſure to bring about, during theſe intervals, any incident neceſſary to the plot or cataſtrophe. The whole of the objection then after all is no more, than that the action of Julius Cæſar laſts but two hours inſtead of three: and if that is no fault, neither can the diviſion of its acts be eſteem'd as one; becauſe the

ſame rule which requires that an action of three hours ſhou'd be divided into five acts, will require alſo, that an action of two hours ſhou'd be divided into three only. There is no reaſon why, becauſe the utmoſt extent of the play is limited to three hours, that therefore we ſhou'd not make it leſs; nor can I ſee why a tragedy, where the three unities are obſerv'd, which is intereſting, and excites terror and compaſſion, which in ſhort does every thing in two hours, that others do in three, ſhou'd not be equally good. A ſtatue wherein the fine proportions and other rules of the art are obſerv'd, is not a leſs fine ſtatue, becauſe it is of a ſmaller ſize than another, made by the ſame rules. Nobody, I believe, thinks the Venus of Medicis leſs perfect in its kind than the Gladiator, becauſe it is but four feet high, and the Gladiator ſix. Mr. de Voltaire, perhaps, gave his Cæſar leſs extent than is uſually allow'd to dramatic performances, only to ſound the opinion and taſte of the public by an eſſay, if we may give that name to ſo finiſh'd a piece. It wou'd have made a kind of revolution in the French theatre, and had been, perhaps, too bold a venture, to talk of liberty and politics for three hours together, to a nation that had been ſo long accuſtom'd to ſee Mithridates ſighing and whining, when he was juſt on the

point

point of marching to the capitol. We are ſurely oblig'd to Mr. de Voltaire for his conduct, and ought by no means to condemn him for not bringing love, or women, into his play: born as they are, to inſpire ſoft and tender ſentiments, they wou'd have play'd an abſurd and ridiculous part between Brutus and Caſſius, *Atroces Animæ:* they make indeed ſo conſpicuous figures elſewhere, that they have no reaſon to complain of being excluded from Cæſar. I ſhall paſs over the many detach'd beauties to be met with in this piece, the ſtrength of its numbers, and the variety of images and ſentiments ſcatter'd throughout. What might we not expect from the author of Brutus and the Henriade? the ſcene of the conſpiracy is one of the fineſt we have ever ſeen on any ſtage: it hath call'd into action that which we never met with before but in dull narration.

* Segnius irritant animos demiſſa per aures
Quam quæ ſunt oculis ſubjecta fidelibus, & quæ
Ipſe ſibi tradit ſpectator.

Even the death of Cæſar paſſes almoſt in ſight of the ſpectators, and thus prevents a recital of it, which how

* See Horace de Arte Poetica. v. 180.

beautiful ſoever, muſt have been comparatively cold and languid; events of this kind, together with every circumſtance attending them, being already known to all the world.

I cannot ſufficiently admire this tragedy, when I conſider what a variety of incidents there are in it, how great the characters are, and how finely ſupported: what a noble contraſt between Brutus and Cæſar! What makes this ſubject moſt difficult to handle, is the great art required, to deſcribe, on the one hand, Brutus with a ſavage ferocious virtue, and even bordering on ingratitude, but at the ſame time engag'd in a righteous cauſe, at leaſt to all appearances, and conformable to the times he liv'd in; and on the other hand, Cæſar, full of clemency and the moſt amiable virtues, heaping favors on his enemies, and yet endeavouring to deſtroy the liberty of his country. We are ſtrongly intereſted for both of them during the whole action of the piece, though it ſhou'd ſeem as if the paſſions muſt hurt and deſtroy each other reciprocally in the end, like two ſeveral weights equal and oppos'd to each other, and conſequently cou'd produce no effect, but that of ſending the ſpectators back diſguſted, and without any emotion. Some ſuch reflections moſt probably

probably induc'd a * brother poet to declare, that he look'd upon this ſubject as the rock of dramatic authors, and that he wou'd gladly propoſe it to any of his rivals. But Mr. de Voltaire, not content with theſe difficulties, ſeems deſirous of creating more, by making Brutus the ſon of Cæſar; which, however, is founded on hiſtory. He has even, by theſe means, found an opportunity of introducing ſome charming ſcenes, and throwing into his piece a new intereſt, which is united to the action, and brings on the cataſtrophe. The harangue of Antony produces a fine effect, and is, in my opinion, a model of ſeducing eloquence. Upon the whole, we may with truth aſſert, that Mr. de Voltaire, in this tragedy, has open'd a new path, and, at the ſame time, trod in it with the higheſt ſucceſs.

* M. Martelli, who wrote ſeveral tragedies in Italian: he made uſe of a new ſpecies of rhimes, in the manner of Alexandrines, a novelty which was by no means favorable to his performances.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JULIUS CÆSAR, Dictator.
MARK ANTONY, Conſul.
JUNIUS BRUTUS, Prætor.
CASSIUS,
CIMBER,
DECIMUS,
DOLABELLA,
CASCA,
} Senators.
ROMANS.
LICTORS.

SCENE, the Capitol at ROME.

THE

DEATH

OF

CÆSAR.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

CÆSAR, ANTONY.

ANTONY.

YES, Cæſar, thou ſhalt reign; the day is come,
Propitious to thy vows, when haughty Rome
At length ſhall know, and ſhall reward they virtues,
Long time unjuſt to thee and to herſelf,
Shall hail thee on the throne her great avenger,
Her conqu'ror, and her king: on Antony
Thou may'ſt depend, who never felt the ſting
Of envy, but ſtill held thy honour dear,

Ev'n as his own: thou know'ſt I form'd the chain
Which for the neck of Rome thou haſt prepar'd,
Content to be the ſecond of mankind;
Fonder to bind the wreath on Cæſar's brows
Than rule myſelf: thou anſwer'ſt me with ſighs,
And the fair proſpect that elates my ſoul
Depreſſes thine; the maſter of the world,
The king of Rome complains: can Cæſar mourn?
Can Cæſar fear? what can inſpire a ſoul
Like thine with terror?

CÆSAR.

Friendſhip, Antony:
But I muſt open all my heart to thee.
Thou know'ſt that I muſt leave thee, fate decrees
We muſt tranſport our arms to Babylon,
To waſh out, in the ſavage Parthian's blood,
The ſhame of Craſſus, and the Roman people:
My touring eagle to the Boſphorus
Shall wing his way, my faithful legions wait
But for the royal wreath around my brows,
The wiſh'd for ſignal: wherefore ſhou'd not Cæſar
Subdue a kingdom Alexander conquer'd?
The Rhine ſubmitted, why ſhou'd not Euphrates
To Cæſar's arms? that hope ſhall animate
The boſom of thy friend, yet blinds him not;

Fortune

Fortune perhaps, grown weary of her favours,
At length may leave me; Pompey ſhe betray'd,
And may quit Cæſar too; the deepeſt wiſdom
Is oft deceiv'd: where faction reigns, our fate
Suſpended hangs, as on the battle's edge,
'Tis but a ſtep from triumph to diſgrace.
Cæſar, thou know'ſt, theſe forty years hath ſerv'd,
Commanded, conquer'd, ſeen the fate of empires
Lodg'd in my hands, and truſt me, Antony,
In ev'ry action the deciſive ſtroke
Depended on a moment: but whate'er
Chance may bring forth, my heart has nought to fear,
Cæſar ſhall conquer without pride, or die
Without complaint: but from thy tender friendſhip
One precious boon I muſt demand of thee;
My children, Antony, will find a friend,
I hope, in thee: I hope that Rome, by me
Defended, and by me ſubdu'd, will own
Thy pow'r; thou ſhalt, with my ſons, enjoy
The name of king, and rule o'er all mankind;
Remember, 'tis the laſt requeſt I make,
That thou wilt be a father to my children;
I aſk not for thy oaths, thoſe idle ſureties
Of human faith, thy promiſe is ſufficient;

For purer is thy word than ſacred altars,
Oft ſtain'd with human perjury and falſehood.

ANTONY.

It was enough to leave thy Antony,
And ſeek for death in foreign climes without him;
To Aſia's plains, when glory calls my friend,
That I muſt ſtay in Italy to plead
My Cæſar's cauſe but it afflicts me more,
To ſee thy noble heart dejected thus,
Diſtruſting fortune, and preſaging ills
That ne'er may happen: wherefore talk'ſt thou thus,
Of Antony's dividing with thy ſons,
Thy fortunes, and thy fame? thou haſt no ſon
But thy Octavius, no adopted heir.

CÆSAR.

I can no longer hide from thee, my friend,
The griefs that prey upon a father's heart;
Octavius, by the laws, is made the ſon
Of Cæſar's choice, I have appointed him
My ſucceſſor; but fate (or ſhall I call it
Propitious, or unkind I know not which)
Hath made me father to a real ſon,
One whom I love with tenderneſs, alas!
But ill repaid by him.

ANTONY

ANTONY.

Can there be one
baſe and ſo ungateful, ſo unworthy
ıe noble blood from whence he ſprang?

CÆSAR.

Attend,
d mark me well: thou know'ſt th' unhappy Brutus,
tructed in the ſchool of ſavage virtue
the ſtern Cato, he whoſe furious zeal
ſends our antient laws, the rigid foe
arbitrary pow'r, who, ſtill in arms
;ainſt me, gives my enemies new hope
d new ſupport, who in Theſſalia's plains
ıs late my captive, whoſe life twice I ſav'd,
ıe of himſelf, was born amongſt my foes,
d bred up far from me.

ANTONY.

Cou'd Brutus, cou'd-——

CÆSAR.

ieve not me, but read this paper.

ANTONY.

Gods!
ıe fierce Servilia! Cato's haughty ſiſter!

CÆSAR.

CÆSAR.

The ſame; a private marriage made us one.
Cato, when firſt our public diſcord roſe,
Indignant forc'd her to another's arms,
But her new huſband, on the very day
That he eſpous'd her, dy'd; and Cæſar's ſon
Was brought up in the name of Brutus, ſtill
Was he reſerv'd, ye gods, to hate his father!
But read, this fatal ſcroll will tell thee all.

ANTONY. [Reads the paper.

Cæſar, I die; the wrath of heav'n, that cuts
My thread of life, alone can end my love.
Farewell: remember, Brutus is thy ſon:
And may that tender friendſhip for his father,
Which at her lateſt hour Servilia felt,
Live in his mind, and make him worthy of thee.

Has cruel fate to Cæſar giv'n a ſon
So much unlike him!

CÆSAR.

Brutus hath his virtues:
His haughty courage, tho' it angers me,
Flatters my pride; I feel a ſecret pleaſure,
Tho' it offends me: his undaunted heart
Riſes ſuperior, and ev'n conquers mine;

I am

I am aſtoniſh'd at him, and his firmneſs
So ſhakes my ſoul I know not how to blame him,
When he condemns the arbitrary pow'r
I have aſſum'd: his genius tow'rs above me:
As man and father, ſome bewitching charm
Deceives me ſtill, and pleads his cauſe within;
Or, born a Roman, ſtill my country's voice,
Spite of myſelf, breaks forth, and calls me tyrant:
Perhaps that liberty I mean t'oppreſs,
Stronger than Cæſar, forces me to love him:
Nay, more: if Brutus owes to me his life,
The ſon of Cæſar muſt abhor a maſter;
For in my early years I thought like him,
Deteſted Sylla, and the name of tyrant:
Myſelf had been like him, a citizen,
The partiſan of liberty and Rome,
Had not that proud uſurper Pompey ſtrove
To cruſh my fame beneath his growing pow'r;
For I was born ambitious, fierce of ſoul,
Yet brave and virtuous; if I were not Cæſar,
I wou'd be Brutus—but we all muſt yield
To our condition: Brutus ſoon will talk
Another language, when he knows his birth:
Truſt me, the royal wreath that's deſtin'd for him
Will bend the ſtubborn temper of his ſoul:
For manners change with fortune: nature, blood,

My

My favors, thy advice, united all
With int'reſt and with duty, muſt reſtore him.

ANTONY.

I doubt it much; I know his ſavage firmneſs;
The ſect he follows is a ſect of fools,
Perverſe and obſtinate, whom nothing moves,
Intractable and bold; they make a merit
Of hard'ning minds againſt humanity,
Whilſt angry nature falls ſubdu'd before them;
To theſe he liſtens, and to theſe alone.
The horrid tenets which theſe ſons of pride
Call duty, hold dominion abſolute,
And lord it o'er their adamantine hearts.
Cato himſelf, that wretched ſtoic, he
Who fell at Utica, that brain-ſick hero,
Who ſpurn'd thy proffer'd pardon, and preferr'd
A ſhameful death to Cæſar's tender friendſhip,
Ev'n Cato was leſs ſtern, leſs proud, than he;
Leſs to be fear'd than this ungrateful ſon,
Whom thy good heart wou'd thus endear to thee.

CÆSAR.

What haſt thou ſaid, my friend? thy words alarm me.

ANTONY.

ANTONY.

I love thee, Cæſar, and muſt not deceive thee.

CÆSAR.

Time ſoftens all things.

ANTONY.

I deſpair of it.

CÆSAR.

What! will his hatred——

ANTONY.

Truſt me.

CÆSAR.

Well, no matter:
I am a father ſtill: I oft have ſerv'd,
Nay ſav'd, my bitt'reſt foes: I wou'd be lov'd
By Rome and by my ſon; my clemency
Shall conquer ev'ry heart; the world ſubdu'd,
Shall join with Brutus to adore my pow'r.
Thou muſt aſſiſt me in the great deſign;
Thou, Antony, didſt lend thy uſeful arm
To aid me in the conqueſt of mankind,
Thou too muſt conquer Brutus; try to ſoften
His ſpirit, and prepare his ſavage virtue
For the important ſecret which my heart
Dreads to reveal; yet he muſt know it ſoon.

ANTONY

ANTONY.

I will do all, but cannot hope ſucceſs.

SCENE II.

CÆSAR, ANTONY, DOLABELLA.

DOLABELLA.

Cæſar, the ſenators attend your pleaſure,
Wait your ſupreme command, and crave admittance.

CÆSAR.

They've ſtaid too long already; let them enter.

ANTONY.

They come, with hatred and ſour diſcontent
On ev'ry brow.

SCENE III.

CÆSAR, ANTONY, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CIMBER, DECIMUS, CINNA, CASCA, &c. Lictors.

CÆSAR ſeated.

Welcome, ye pillars of immortal Rome,
And friends to Cæſar: Cimber, Decimus,
Caſſius, and Cinna, and thou, deareſt Brutus,
Come near: at length behold th'important hour
When Cæſar, if the gods ſhall ſmile upon me,
Goes to complete the conqueſt of the world,

To

To ſeize the throne of Cyrus, and appeaſe
Our Craſſus' angry ſhade: the time is come
When what remains of univerſal empire,
Still unſubdu'd, ſhall yield to Rome and me:
Euphrates calls; to-morrow I depart.
Brutus and Caſſius follow me to Aſia;
Antony's care is Gaul and Italy;
Cimber muſt rule o'er the ſubjected kings
Of Betis' borders, and th' Atlantick ſea;
Lycia and Greece I give to Decimus;
Pontus to thee, Marcellus; and to Caſca
All Syria's wide domain. Our conqueſts thus
Protected, and Rome left in happineſs
And union, nought remains but to determine
What title Cæſar, arbiter of Rome,
And of the world, ſhall wear: by your command
Sylla was call'd Dictator; Marius, Conſul;
And Pompey, Emp'ror: I ſubdued the laſt,
Let that ſuffice; new empires will demand
New names; we muſt have one more great, more
ſacred,
Leſs liable to change; one long rever'd
In antient Rome, and dear to all mankind.
'Tis rumour'd thro' the world, that Rome, in vain,
Wars on the Perſian; that a king alone

Muſt

Muſt conquer there, and only kings can rule:
Cæſar will go, but Cæſar is no king,
An humble citizen alone, but fam'd
For his paſt ſervice, ſubject to the will
And fond caprice of an uncertain people,
Who yet may thwart —— you underſtand me, Romans,
You know my hopes, my merit, and —— my pow'r.

CIMBER.

Cæſar, I'll anſwer thee. Thoſe crowns, and ſceptres,
That world you give us, to the people's eye,
And to the ſenate, jealous of their rights,
Appear an inj'ry, not a favor done,
On ſuch conditions: Marius, Pompey, Sylla,
Thoſe proud uſurpers of the people's pow'r,
Never pretended thus to canton out
Rome's conqueſts, or to dictate thus, like kings:
We hoped from Cæſar's clemency a gift
More precious, and a nobler treaſure, far
Above the kingdoms which thy bounty gave.

CÆSAR.

What woud'ſt thou aſk of Cæſar?

CIMBER.

Liberty.

CASSIUS.

was thy promiſe; thou didſt ſwear thyſelf
ır ever to uproot deſpotic pow'r.
hought the happy moment now was come,
hen the world's conqu'ror ſhou'd have made us happy:
ome bath'd in blood, deſerted, and enſlav'd,
und comfort in that hope: we were her children
fore we were thy ſlaves — I know thy pow'r,
id know what thou haſt ſworn.

BRUTUS.

Be Cæſar great,
it Rome ſtill free: the miſtreſs of the world
road, ſhall ſhe be manacled at home!
ile o'er the univerſe, be call'd a queen,
id yet be fetter'd! What will it avail
y wretched country, and her ſons, to know
iat Cæſar has new ſlaves to trample on?
rhaps the Perſians are not our worſt foes,
e may have greater. I've no more to offer.

CÆSAR.

id thou too, Brutus!

ANTONY. [aſide to Cæſar.

Mark their inſolence;
id ſee if they are worthy of thy favour.

CÆSAR.

CÆSAR.

And dare ye thus, ungrateful as ye are,
Abuſe my patience, and exhauſt my love?
My ſubjects all, by right of conqueſt mine,
I bought you with my ſword; ye ſpurn'd indeed
At Marius, but ye were the ſlaves of Pompey,
And only breath till Cæſar's wrath, too long
Reſtrain'd already, burſts with fury on you.
Ye vile Republicans, by mercy taught
But to rebel, ye durſt not thus have talk'd
To Sylla; but my clemency provokes
Your baſe ungrateful ſpirit to inſult me:
Cæſar, you think, will never condeſcend
To take revenge, this makes you talk ſo bravely
Of Rome and of your country, and affect
This patriot pride, this grandeur of the ſoul,
Before your conqu'ror: to Pharſalia's plains
You ſhou'd have brought 'em; fortune now has plac'd us
At diſtance from each other: henceforth learn,
Who knows not how to conquer, muſt obey.

BRUTUS.

No: Cæſar we ſhall only learn to die.
Who begg'd his life in Theſſaly? Thou gav'ſt
What was not aſk'd indeed, but to debaſe us,

And

And we abhor the gift on ſuch conditions.
Obey thee? No: pour forth thy wrath upon us;
Begin with me; ſtrike here, if thou woud'ſt reign.

CÆSAR.

Brutus attend —— you may retire.

[To the ſenators, who go out.

What words
Are theſe? away! They pierce my very ſoul;
Cæſar is far from wiſhing for thy death:
Leave this raſh ſenate, I entreat thee, ſtay,
Thou only can'ſt diſarm me; thee alone
Cæſar wou'd wiſh to love: ſtay with me, Brutus.

BRUTUS.

But keep thy promiſe, and I'm thine for ever:
If thou'rt a tyrant, I deteſt thy love;
I will not ſtay with Antony or thee:
He is no Roman, for he wants a king.

SCENE IV.

CÆSAR, ANTONY.

ANTONY.

What ſays my friend? Did Antony deceive him?
Think'ſt thou that nature e'er can move a ſoul
So fierce, and ſo inflexible? No: leave,
I beg thee, unreveal'd the fatal ſecret

That

That weighs upon thy heart: let him deplore
The fall of Rome, but never let him know
Whoſe blood he perſecutes: he merits not
His noble birth, ungrateful to thy goodneſs,
Ungrateful to thy love; henceforth renounce him.

CÆSAR.

I cannot, for I love him ſtill.

ANTONY.

Then ceaſe
To love thy pow'r, renounce the diadem,
Deſcend from the high rank which thou haſt borne;
Mercy ill ſuits with thy authority:
It checks thy growing pow'r, and mars thy purpoſe.
What! Rome beneath thy laws, and ſuffer Caſſius
To thwart thee thus; and Cimber too, and Cinna;
Shall ſenators like theſe, obſcure and low,
Talk thus before the ſov'reign of mankind?
The vanquiſh'd wretches breath, and brave their maſter.

CÆSAR.

ſy equals born, they yielded to my arms;
oo much above to fear them: I forgive
heir trembling at the yoke which they muſt bear.

ANTONY.

ANTONY.

Marius had been leſs ſparing of their blood,
And Sylla wou'd have puniſh'd them.

CÆSAR.

That Sylla
Was a Barbarian, born but to oppreſs:
Murther and rage were all his policy,
And all his grandeur: amidſt ſighs and groans,
And puniſhments and death, he govern'd Rome:
He was its terror, I wou'd be its joy,
And its delight: I know the people well;
A day will change 'em; laviſh of their love
And of their hatred; both are gain'd with eaſe:
My grandeur galls 'em, but my clemency
Attracts 'em ſtill: 'tis policy to pardon
The foe that cannot hurt us, and an air
Of liberty will reconcile their minds,
And make their chains ſit eaſy: I muſt cover
The pit with flowr's, if I wou'd draw e'm to it,
And ſooth the tiger e'er I bind him faſt.
Yes, I will pleaſe them, ev'n whilſt I oppreſs,
Charm, and enſlave them, and revenge myſelf
On ev'ry foe by forcing him to love me.

ANTONY.

You muſt be fear'd, or you will never reign.

CÆSAR.

CÆSAR.

In battle only Cæſar wou'd be fear'd.

ANTONY.

The people will abuſe thy eaſy nature.

CÆSAR.

I tell thee, no; the people worſhip me.
Behold that temple there, which Rome hath rais'd
To Cæſar's clemency.

ANTONY.

They'll raiſe another
Perhaps to vengeance: thou haſt cauſe to dread
Their ranc'rous hearts, ſtill cheriſh'd by deſpair,
Cruel by duty, and the ſlaves of Rome.
Caſſius alarm'd foreſees that Antony
This day ſhall place the crown on Cæſar's head,
And ev'n before thy face they murmur'd at it.
'Twere beſt to gain the moſt impetuous of them,
And win 'em to our int'reſt: to prevent
All danger, Cæſar muſt conſtrain himſelf.

CÆSAR.

Cou'd I have fear'd, I wou'd have puniſh'd them;
Adviſe me not to make myſelf deteſted:
Cæſar has learn'd to fight, has learn'd to conquer,

But knows not how to puniſh: let us hence,
And, ſtrangers to ſuſpicion and revenge,
Rule without violence o'er the conquer'd world.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II. SCENE I.

BRUTUS, ANTONY, DOLABELLA.

ANTONY.

THIS bitterneſs of hate, this proud refuſal,
Breaths leſs of virtue than of ſavage fierceneſs:
Cæſar's indulgence, his high rank and pow'r,
At leaſt deſerv'd a milder treatment from you,
And more complacency; you might at leaſt
Have talk'd with him: did you but know with whom
You are at variance, you wou'd ſhudder at it —

BRUTUS.

I ſhudder now; but 'tis at hearing thee;
Foe to thy country, which thou haſt betray'd
And ſold to Cæſar, think'ſt thou to deceive
Or to corrupt me? go, and cringe to him,
Fawn on your haughty lord, I know your arts,
You long to be a ſlave; you want a king,
Yet you are Romans.

ANTONY.

Brutus, I'm a friend,
And boaſt a heart that loves humanity:
I am contented with this humble virtue:
But thou woud'ſt be a hero, yet art nought
But a barbarian; and thy ſavage pride
Grew fond of virtue, but to make us loath her.

SCENE II.

BRUTUS alone.

What baſeneſs, heav'n! what ignominious ſlaves!
Behold, my wretched country, your ſupport,
Horatius, Decius, and thou great avenger
Of ſacred laws, Brutus, my kindred blood,
Behold your ſucceſſors; juſt gods, are theſe
The noble reliques of our Roman grandeur?
We kiſs the hand that binds us to the yoke;
Cæſar has raviſh'd e'vn our virtues from us:
I look for Rome, but find it now no more.
O ye immortal heroes, ye who fell
In her defence, whoſe images now ſtrike
My ſoul with awe, and fill my eyes with tears,
The family of Pompey, and thou Cato,
Thou laſt of Scipio's glorious race, I feel
A lively ſpark of your immortal virtues
Rebound from you, and animate my heart:

You

You live in Brutus ſtill, and in his breaſt
Have left the honour of the Roman name
The tyrant wou'd have ſtol'n. What do I ſee,
Great Pompey, at thy ſtatues foot? a paper.

[He takes the paper and reads

Brutus, thou ſleep'ſt, and Rome's in chains.

O Rome,
My eyes are ever open ſtill for thee;
Reproach me not for chains which I abhor.
Another paper! *No: thou art not Brutus:*
Cruel reflection! Tyrant Cæſar, tremble,
This ſtroke muſt end thee: *no: thou art not Brutus,*
I am, I will be Brutus; I will periſh,
Or ſet my country free: Rome ſtill, I ſee,
Has virtuous hearts: ſhe calls for an avenger,
And has her eyes on Brutus; ſhe awakens
My ſleeping ſoul, and ſhakes my tardy hand:
She calls for blood, and ſhall be ſatisfy'd.

SCENE III.

BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CINNA, CASCA, DEGIMUS.

Attendants.

CASSIUS.

'Tis the laſt time we may embrace, my friends,
Bury'd beneath the ruins of his country,
Caſſius muſt fall; Cæſar can ne'er forgive me;

He knows our hearts, he knows our reſolution;
Our ſouls, untainted by corruption, thwart
His purpoſes; in us he will deſtroy
The laſt of Romans: yes, my friends, 'tis paſt;
Our laws, our country, and our honour's loſt;
Rome is no more; he triumphs over her,
And o'er mankind; our thoughtleſs anceſtors
But fought for Cæſar, but for Cæſar conquer'd:
The ſpoils of kings, the ſceptre of the world,
Six hundred years of virtues, toils, and war,
Were ſpent for Cæſar; he enjoys the fruit
Of all our dear-bought vict'ries: O, my Brutus,
Wert thou too born to crouch beneath a maſter?
Our liberty is gone.

BRUTUS.

It will revive.

CASSIUS.

What ſay'ſt thou? hark! did you not hear a ſhout?

BRUTUS.

'Twas the vile rabble: think not of them, Caſſius.

CASSIUS.

Did'ſt thou ſay, liberty — that noiſe again!

SCENE.

SCENE IV.

BRUTUS, CASSIUS, DECIMUS, CIMBER.

CASSIUS.

Ah! Cimber, is it thou? ſpeak, what hath happen'd?

DECIMUS.

Some new attempt on liberty and Rome,
What haſt thou ſeen?

CIMBER.

Our ſhame. When haughty Cæſar
Came to the temple, he look'd down upon us
Ev'n like the thund'rer, Capitolian Jove;
Then proudly told us of his bold deſign
Of adding Perſia to the Roman empire:
The people kneel'd before their idol, call'd him
Rome's great avenger, conqu'ror of the world;
But Cæſar wanted yet another title
To gratify his inſolent ambition;
When, lo! amid'ſt this ſcene of adulation,
Came Antony, and buſtled thro' the croud
That ſtood 'twixt him and Cæſar; in his hand
A crown and ſceptre: when, O ſhameful act,
Diſgraceful to a Roman! whilſt we ſtood
In ſilent admiration, unabaſh'd,
He plac'd the crown on Cæſar's head; then kneel'd,

And cry'd out, Cæſar live and reign o'er us,
And o'er the world: our Romans, as he ſpake,
Turn'd pale, and with their cries tumultuous wrung
The temple's vaulted roof: ſome fled with terror,
Whilſt others bluſhing ſtood, and wept their fate.
Cæſar, who read reſentment in their looks,
And indignation but too viſible,
With well-diſſembled modeſty, took off
The radiant crown, and roll'd it at his feet.
Inſtant the ſcene was chang'd, and ev'ry Roman
Welcom'd with ſmiles returning liberty,
Ill-founded hopes, and momentary joy!
Antony ſeem'd aſtoniſh'd: Cæſar ſtill
Bluſh'd and diſſembled; and the more he ſtrove
To hide his grief, the more was he applauded.
By moderation he wou'd veil his crimes,
Affects to ſcorn the crown, and ſpurn it from him:
But, ſpite of all his efforts to conceal it,
Was gall'd within to hear the people praiſe him
For virtues which he never will poſſeſs.
No longer able to conceal his rage
And diſappointment, with contracted brow
He left the capitol, and in an hour
The ſenate muſt attend him: an hour hence
Shall Cæſar change the ſtate of Rome: thou know'ſt,

O Brutus! half our ſenate is corrupted,
Have bought their country, and will ſell it now
To Cæſar: they are far more infamous
Ev'n than the people, who at leaſt abhor
The name of king: Cæſar, already veſted
With regal pow'r, yet wiſhes for the crown;
The people have refus'd him, but the ſenate
Beſtow it on him: what remains?

CASSIUS.

To die;
To end a life of mis'ry and reproach:
I've dragg'd it on whilſt yet a ray of hope
Dawn'd on my country, but her lateſt hour
Is come, and Caſſius never ſhall ſurvive her.
Let others weep for Rome, I can't avenge
My country's cauſe, but I can periſh with her.
I go where all our gods—O Scipio, Pompey,
'Tis time to follow you, and imitate
Great Cato.

BRUTUS.

No: we'll not be followers,
But bright examples: the world's eye, my friends,
Is fix'd on us; be it our part to anſwer
The great expectance of our bleeding country.
Had Cato ta'en my counſel, he had fall'n

More nobly, and the tyrant's blood had flow'd
Mix'd with his own: he turn'd his blameleſs hand
Againſt himſelf; but little did his death
Avail mankind: Cato did all for glory,
And nothing for his country: there, my friends,
There only err'd the greateſt of mankind.

CASSIUS.

What can we do in this diſaſtrous criſis?

BRUTUS.

[Shews the paper.

See what was wrote to me, and learn our duty.

CASSIUS.

The ſame reproach was ſent to me.

BRUTUS.

It ſhews
We had deſerv'd it.

CIMBER.

Quick, the fatal hour
Approaches, when a tyrant ſhall deſtroy
The Roman name: one hour, and all is gone.

BRUTUS.

One hour, and Cæſar—dies.

CASSIUS.

Ha! now thou art
What Brutus ſhou'd be.

DECIMUS.

DECIMUS.

—Worthy of thy race,
The ſcourge of tyrants; thou haſt ſpoke the thoughts
Of my own heart.

CASSIUS.

O Brutus, thou reviv'ſt me;
'Twas what my ſorrows, what my rage expected
From thy exalted virtue; Rome inſpires
The great deſign; thy voice alone decrees
The death of tyrants: O my deareſt Brutus,
Let us blot out this infamous reproach
On all mankind, and whilſt Jove's thunder ſleeps,
Revenge the capitol. What ſay ye, Romans,
Have ye the ſame unconquerable heart,
The ſame deſires?

CIMBER.

Caſſius, we think with you,
Deſpiſe the thought of life, abhor the tyrant;
We love our country, and we will avenge her.
If there's a ſpark of Roman virtue left,
Brutus and Caſſius will revive it.

DECIMUS.

Born
The guardians of the ſtate, the great avengers
Of ev'ry crime, too long th' oppreſſive hand
Of pow'r hath gall'd us, and 'twere added guilt

To ſpare the tyrant, or ſuſpend the blow:
Say, whom ſhall we admit to ſhare this honour?

BRUTUS.

We are ourſelves enow to ſave our country.
Emilius, Dolabella, Lepidus
And Bibulus, are all the ſlaves of Cæſar.
Cic'ro may ſerve us with his eloquence,
And that alone; he can harangue the ſenate,
But is too timid in the hour of danger:
He'll talk for Rome, but is not fit t'avenge her:
We'll leave the orator who charms his country
The taſk of praiſing us when we have ſav'd it.
With you alone, my friends, will I partake
This glorious danger, this immortal honour:
The ſenate are to meet him an hour hence,
There I'll ſurpriſe, deſtroy him there: this ſword,
Deep in his boſom bury'd, ſhall revenge
Cato, and Pompey, and the Roman people:
I know th' attempt is perilous and bold:
His watchful guards are plac'd on ev'ry ſide:
The changeful people, flutt'ring and inconſtant,
Are doubtful whether they ſhou'd love or hate him.
Death ſeems, my friends, to be our certain fate:
But O! how glorious ſuch a death will be!

How

How much to be deſir'd! how noble is it
To fall in ſuch a cauſe, to ſee our blood
Flow with the blood of tyrants; with what pleaſure
Shall we behold this laſt illuſtrious hour!
Yes, let us die, my friends, but die with Cæſar;
And may that liberty his crimes oppreſs
Riſe from his aſhes, and for ever flouriſh!

CASSIUS.

Debate not then, but to the capitol
Let us away; there he has injur'd us,
And there 'tis fit he ſhou'd be ſacrific'd:
Fear not the people, tho' they're doubtful now,
Whene'er the idol falls, they will deteſt him.

BRUTUS.

Swear then with me upon this ſword; all ſwear
By Cato's blood, by Pompey's, by the ſhades
Of thoſe brave Romans who in Afric's plains
Fell glorious; ſwear by all th' avenging gods
Of Rome, that Cæſar by your hands ſhall die.

CASSIUS.

Let us do more, my friends; here let us ſwear
To root out all who, like himſelf, ſhall ſtrive
To govern here: ſons, brothers, fathers, all,
If they are tyrants, Brutus, are our foes:
A true republican has neither ſon,

Father, nor brother, but the common-weal,
His gods, the laws, his virtue, and his country.

BRUTUS.

For ever let me join my blood with yours;
All link'd together in one ſacred knot,
Th' adopted ſons of Liberty and Rome,
We'll ſeal our union with the tyrant's blood.

[advancing towards the ſtatue of Pompey.

By you, illuſtrious heroes, who excite
Our duty, and inſpire the great deſign,
O Pompey, at thy ſacred knees, we ſwear,
Nought for ourſelves we do, but all for Rome,
We ſwear to be united for our country;
We ſwear to live, to fight, and die together.
Let us be gone: away: we've ſtaid too long.

SCENE V.

CÆSAR, BRUTUS.

CÆSAR.

Stop, Brutus, I muſt talk with thee; attend:
Where woud'ſt thou fly?

BRUTUS.

From Tyranny, and thee.

CÆSAR.

Lictors, detain him.

BRUTUS.

Thou wou'd'ſt have my life,
Take it.

CÆSAR.

CÆSAR.

No: Brutus, had I wanted that,
Thou know'ſt, I cou'd command it with a word,
And thou haſt merited no better fate:
It is the pride of thy ungrateful heart
Still to offend me; and I find thee here
Amongſt thoſe Romans whoſe dark perfidy
I moſt ſuſpect, with thoſe who proudly dar'd
To blame my conduct, and defy my pow'r.

BRUTUS.

They talk'd like Romans, gave thee noble counſel;
Had'ſt thou been wiſe, thou wou'd'ſt have follow'd it.

CÆSAR.

Yet I'll be calm, and bear thy inſolence,
Will ſtoop beneath myſelf, and talk to thee.
What lay'ſt thou to my charge?

BRUTUS.

A ravag'd world,
The blood of nations, and thy plunder'd country;
Thy pow'r, thy ſpecious virtues that gild o'er
Thy crimes, thy fatal clemency, that makes
Thy chains ſo eaſy, a deſtructive charm
To ſooth thy captives, and deceive mankind.

CÆSAR.

CÆSAR.

Reproach like this had ſuited Pompey well;
He whoſe diſſembled virtues have betray'd thee,
That haughty citizen, more fatal far,
Wou'd not admit ev'n Cæſar as his equal.
Think'ſt thou, if he had conquer'd, his proud ſoul
Had left ſecure the liberty of Rome?
He wou'd have rul'd you with a rod of iron,
What then had Brutus done?

BRUTUS.

He wou'd have ſlain him.

CÆSAR.

Is that the fate which Cæſar muſt expect
From thee? thou anſwer'ſt not. O Brutus, Brutus,
Thou liv'ſt but for my ruin.

BRUTUS.

If thou think'ſt ſo,
Prevent my fury, what witholds thee?

CÆSAR.

[Giving him the letter from Servilia.

Nature,
And my own heart: read there, ungrateful, read
And know whoſe blood thou haſt oppos'd to mine;
See whom thou hat'ſt, and if thou dar'ſt, go on.

BRUTUS.

BRUTUS. [reading.

What have I read? where am I? do my eyes
Deceive me?

CÆSAR.

Now my ſon, my Brutus.

BRUTUS.

Cæſar
My father, gracious gods!

CÆSAR.

Ungrateful, yes
I am thy father: whence this deadly ſilence?
Why ſobb'ſt thou thus, my ſon? Why do I hold thee
Thus in my arms mute and inſenſible?
Nature alarms, but cannot ſoften thee.

BRUTUS.

O dreadful fate! it drives me to deſpair:
My oaths! my country! Rome for ever dear!
Cæſar—alas! I've liv'd too long.

CÆSAR.

O ſpeak,
I ſee thy heart is lab'ring with remorſe
And anguiſh: O hide nothing from me: ſtill
Thou'rt ſilent: does the ſacred name of ſon
Offend thee, Brutus? art thou fearful of it?
Fear'ſt thou to love me, to partake my fortunes?
Is Cæſar's blood ſo hateful to thee! Oh

This

This ſceptre of the world, this pow'r ſupreme,
For thee alone, that Cæſar, whom thou hat'ſt,
Deſir'd them: with Octavius and thyſelf
I wiſh'd but to divide the rich reward
Of all my labours, and the name of king.

BRUTUS.

O gods!

CÆSAR.

Thou can'ſt not ſpeak: theſe tranſports, Brutus,
Spring they from hatred, or from tenderneſs?
What ſecret weight hangs heavy on thy ſoul?

BRUTUS.

Cæſar—

CÆSAR.

Well, what?

BRUTUS.

I cannot ſpeak to him.

CÆSAR.

Thou ſeem'ſt as if thou durſt not call me father.

BRUTUS.

O, if thou art my father, grant me this
This only boon.

CÆSAR.

Aſk it: to give it thee
Will make me happy.

BRUTUS.

Kill me then this moment,
Or wiſh no more to be a king.

CÆSAR

CÆSAR.

Away
Barbarian, hence! unworthy of my love,
Unworthy of thy race, thou art no more
My ſon: go, henceforth I diſclaim thee;
My heart ſhall take example from thy own,
And ſtifle nature's voice; ſhall learn of thee
To be inhuman: hence, I know thee not.
Think not I mean again to ſupplicate,
No, thou ſhalt ſee I've pow'r to cruſh you all:
I will no longer liſten to the pleas
Of mercy, but obey the laws of juſtice;
My eaſy heart is weary of forgiveneſs:
I'll act like Sylla now, like him be cruel,
And make you tremble at my vengeance: go,
Find out your vile ſeditious friends, they all
Inſulted me, and all ſhall ſuffer for it:
They know what Cæſar can do, and ſhall find
What Cæſar dare: if I am barbarous,
Remember, thou alone haſt made me ſo.

BRUTUS.

I muſt not leave him to his cruel purpoſe,
But ſave, it poſſible, my friends, and Cæſar.

End of the Second Act.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

CASSIUS, CIMBER, DECIMUS, CINNA, CASCA, with the reſt of the Conſpirators.

CASSIUS.

At length the hour is come when Rome again
Shall breath, again ſhall flouriſh; unoppreſs'd
By tyrants, ſoon the miſtreſs of the world
To freedom and to fame ſhall be reſtor'd.
Yours is the honour, Decimus, and Caſca,
Cimber, and Probus, but one hour and Cæſar
Shall be no more: what Cato, Pompey, all
The pow'r of Aſia, never cou'd perform,
We, my brave friends, alone ſhall execute;
We will avenge our country: on this day
Thus may we ſpeak to all mankind: *Henceforth*
Reſpect the ſtate of Rome, for ſhe is free.

CIMBER.

Behold thy friends all ready to obey thee;
To live or die with thee; to ſerve the ſenate;
To take the tyrant's life, or loſe their own.

DECIMUS.

But where is Brutus, Cæſar's deadlieſt foe,
He who aſſembled, he who made us ſwear,

Who firſt ſhall plunge the dagger in his breaſt,
Why comes he not? the ſon-in-law of Cato
Shou'd not have tarry'd thus; he may be ſtopp'd;
Cæſar perhaps may know—but ſee he comes;
Gods! what dejection in his aſpect!

SCENE II.

BRUTUS, the reſt of the Conſpirators.

CASSIUS.

Brutus;
What ſinks thee thus? what new misfortune? ſay,
Doth Cæſar know it all? is Rome betray'd?

BRUTUS.

He knows not our deſign upon his life,
But truſts to you.

DECIMUS.

What then hath troubled thee?

BRUTUS.

A dreadful ſecret, that will make you tremble.

CASSIUS.

Cæſar's approaching death! perhaps our own!
Brutus, we all can die, but ſhall not tremble.

BRUTUS.

I will unveil it, and aſtoniſh thee.
Cæſar thou know'ſt is Brutus' foe; I've ſworn

To

To kill him, fix'd the time, the place, the moment
Of his deſtruction: 'tis but what I owe
To Rome, to you, and your poſterity,
Nay, to the happineſs of all mankind,
And the firſt blow muſt come from Brutus' hand:
All is prepar'd; and now let me inform thee,
That Brutus is — his ſon.

CIMBER.

The ſon of Cæſar!

CASSIUS.

His ſon!

DECIMUS.

O Rome!

BRUTUS.

Yes: Cæſar and Servilia,
Marry'd in private, Brutus was the fruit
Of their unhappy nuptials.

CIMBER.

Art thou then
A tyrant's ſon?

CASSIUS.

It cannot, muſt not be:
Thou art too much a Roman.

BRUTUS.

'Tis too true;
Ye ſee my friends the horror of my fate:
But I am yours, for ſacred is my word:

Which of you all hath ſtrength of mind ſufficient,
With more than ſtoic courage, far above
The common race of men, to tell me how
Brutus ſhou'd act? I yield me to your ſentence:
All ſilent! all with down caſt eyes! thou, Caſſius,
Wilt not thou ſpeak? no friendly hand ſtretch'd out
To ſave me from this horrid precipice!

BRUTUS.

Caſſius, thou trembleſt; thy aſtoniſh'd ſoul—

CASSIUS.

I tremble at the counſel I muſt give.

BRUTUS.

Yet ſpeak.

CASSIUS.

Were Brutus one amongſt the croud
Of vulgar citizens, I ſhou'd have ſaid,
Go, be a brother tyrant, ſerve thy father,
Deſtroy that country which thou ſhoud'ſt ſupport,
Rome ſhall hereafter be reveng'd on both:
But I am talking to the noble Brutus,
The ſcourge of tyrants, whoſe unconquer'd heart
Hath not a drop of Cæſar's blood within it:
Thou knew'ſt the traitor Catiline, whoſe rage
Was well nigh fatal to us all.

BRUTUS.

BRUTUS.

I did.

CASSIUS.

If on the day when that abhorred monſter
Levell'd the blow at liberty and Rome,
If when the ſenate had condemn'd the traitor
He had acknowledg'd Brutus for his ſon,
How woud'ſt thou then have acted?

BRUTUS.

Can'ſt thou aſk me?
Think'ſt thou, my heart, thus in a moment chang'd,
Cou'd ballance 'twixt a traitor and my country!

CASSIUS.

Brutus, that word alone points out thy duty:
It is the ſenate's will, and Rome's in ſafety.
But ſay, haſt thou indeed thoſe ſecret checks
Which vulgar minds miſtake for nature's voice,
And ſhall a word from Cæſar thus extinguiſh
Thy love for Rome, thy duty, and thy faith?
Or true or falſe the ſecret that he told thee,
Is he leſs guilty, art thou leſs a Roman,
Art thou not Brutus, tho' the ſon of Cæſar?
Is not thy hand, thy heart, thy honour pledg'd
To us and to thy country? If thou art

The tyrant's ſon, Rome is thy mother ſtill,
We are thy brothers. Born as Brutus was
Within theſe ſacred walls, th' adopted ſon
Of Cato, bred by Scipio and by Pompey,
The friend of Caſſius, what woud'ſt thou deſire?
Theſe are thy nobleſt titles, and another
Wou'd but diſgrace them: what if Cæſar, ſmit
With lawleſs paſſion for the fair Servilia,
Seduced her to his arms, and gave thee birth,
Bury thy mother's follies in oblivion:
'Twas Cato form'd thy noble ſoul to virtue,
And Cato is thy father; therefore looſe
The ſhameful tie that binds thee to another:
Firm to thy oaths and to thy cauſe remain,
And own no parents but the world's avengers.

BRUTUS.

My noble friends, to you I next appeal.

CIMBER.

By Caſſius judge of us, by us of Caſſius:
Cou'd we think otherwiſe, of all Rome's ſons
We were moſt guilty: but why aſk of us
What thy own breaſt can beſt inform thee? Brutus
Alone can tell what Brutus ought to do.

BRUTUS.

BRUTUS.

Now then, my friends, I'll lay my heart before you,
With all its horrors; O 'tis deeply wounded,
And tears have flow'd ev'n from a ſtoick's eye:
After the dreadful oath which I have made
To ſerve my country, and to kill my father,
I weep to ſee myſelf the ſon of Cæſar,
Admire his virtues, and condemn his crimes,
Lament the hero, and abhor the tyrant,
Pity and horror rend my troubled ſoul;
I wiſh that fate you have prepar'd for him
Wou'd fall on Brutus: but I'll tell you more,
Know, I eſteem him, and 'midſt all his crimes,
His nobleneſs of heart has won me to him:
If Rome cou'd e'er ſubmit to regal pow'r,
He is the only tyrant we ſhou'd ſpare.
Be not alarm'd; that name alone ſecures me,
Rome and the ſenate have my faith, the welfare
Of all mankind declares againſt a king.
Yes, I embrace the virtuous taſk with horror,
And tremble at it, but I will be faithful:
I go to talk with Cæſar, and perhaps
To change and ſoften him, perhaps to ſave
Rome and himſelf: O may the gods beſtow
Perſuaſive utt'rance on my lips, and pow'r

To move his ſoul; but if in vain I plead
The cauſe of liberty, if Cæſar ſtill
Is deaf to my intreaties, ſtrike, deſtroy him,
I'll not betray my country for my father;
The world, aſtoniſh'd, may approve or blame
My cruel firmneſs, and this deed hereafter
Be call'd a deed of horror, or of glory;
My ſoul is not ambitious of applauſe,
Or fearful of reproach; a Roman ſtill,
And independent, to the voice of duty
And that alone I liſten; for the reſt,
'Tis equal all; away; be ſlaves no longer.

CASSIUS.

The welfare of the ſtate depends on thee,
And on thy ſacred word we ſhall rely,
As if great Cato and the gods of Rome
Had promis'd to defend us.

SCENE III.

BRUTUS alone.

Cæſar comes
Ev'n now to meet me, 'tis th' appointed hour,
And this the place, ev'n in the capitol,
Where he *muſt die*: let me not hate him, gods!

O ſtop this arm uplifted to deſtroy him,
Inſpire his noble heart with love of Rome,
And if he is my father, make him juſt!
He comes: I have not pow'r to ſpeak, or move,
Great ſpirit of Cato, now ſupport my virtue!

SCENE IV.

CÆSAR, BRUTUS.

CÆSAR.

Brutus, we're met: what wou'dſt thou? haſt thou yet
A human heart? art thou the ſon of Cæſar?

BRUTUS.

I am, if Cæſar be the ſon of Rome.

CÆSAR.

Was it for this, thou proud republican,
We met together? com'ſt thou to inſult me?
Not all my bounties ſhow'rd upon thy head,
Glory and empire, and a ſubject world,
Waiting to pay thee homage, nought can move
Thy ſtubborn heart: what think'ſt thou of a crown?

BRUTUS.

I think on it with horror.

CÆSAR.

CÆSAR.

Prejudice
And paſſion blind thee, I excuſe thy weakneſs;
But can'ſt thou hate me?

BRUTUS.

No: I love thee, Cæſar;
Thy noble deeds long ſince inclin'd my heart
To rev'rence thee; before thou had'ſt diſclos'd
The ſecret of my birth, I wept to ſee thee
At once the glory and the ſcourge of Rome:
Wou'd Cæſar be a Roman citizen,
I ſhou'd adore him, and wou'd ſacrifice
My life and fortune to defend his cauſe;
But Cæſar, as a king, I muſt abhor.

CÆSAR.

What do'ſt thou hate me for?

BRUTUS.

Thy tyranny.
O liſten to the counſel, to the pray'rs,
The tears of Rome, the ſenate, and thy ſon;
Wou'dſt thou deſire to be the firſt of men?
Wou'dſt thou enjoy a right ſuperior far
To all that war and conqueſt can beſtow?
Wou'dſt thou be more than king, nay more than
Cæſar——

CÆSAR.

What's to be done?

BRUTUS.

Thou ſeeſt the world enſlav'd,
Bound to thy chariot, break their chains in ſunder,
Renounce the diadem, and be a Roman.

CÆSAR.

What haſt thou bade me do?

BRUTUS.

What Sylla did
Before thee; he had waded in our blood,
He made Rome free, and all was ſoon forgotten;
Deep as his hands were dipp'd in deadly ſlaughter,
He left the throne, and waſh'd his crimes away.
Thou had'ſt not Sylla's cruelty and rage,
Adopt his virtues then; thy heart, we know,
Can pardon, therefore can thy heart do more;
'Tis Rome thou muſt forgive: then ſhalt thou reign
As Cæſar ſhou'd, then Brutus is thy ſon:
Still do I plead in vain?

CÆSAR.

Rome wants a maſter,
As one day thou perhaps may'ſt dearly prove.
Brutus, our laws ſhou'd with our manners change;
That liberty thou dot'ſt on is no more

That

Than the fool's right to hurt himſelf, and Rome,
That ſpred deſtruction round the world, now ſeems
To work her own; the great Coloſſus falls,
And in her ruin buries half mankind:
To me ſhe ſtretches forth her feeble arm
To aid her in her perils. Since the days
Of Sylla, all our virtue's loſt; the laws,
Rome, and the ſtate, are nought but empty names.
Alas! thou talk'ſt in theſe corrupted times
As if the Decii, and Æmilii liv'd;
Cato deceiv'd thee, and thy fatal virtue
Will but deſtroy thy country, and thyſelf;
Submit thy reaſon to the conqueror
Of Cato and of Pompey, to a father
Who loves thee, Brutus, who laments thy errors;
Give me thy heart, and be indeed my ſon:
Take other ſteps, and force not nature thus
Againſt thy ſelf: not anſwer me, my Brutus,
But turn thy eyes away?

BRUTUS.

I'm not my ſelf:
Strike me, ye gods! O Cæſar——

CÆSAR.

Thou art mov'd,
I ſee thou art, my ſon; thy ſoften'd ſoul——

BRUTUS.

Thy life's in danger; know'ſt thou that, my father?
Know'ſt thou, there's not a Roman then but wiſhes
In ſecret to deſtroy thee? let thy own,
Thy country's ſafety, plead my cauſe: by me
Thy genius ſpeaks, it throws me at thy feet,
And preſſes for thy welfare; in the name
Of all thoſe gods thou haſt ſo late forgotten,
Of all thy virtues, in the name of Rome;
Shall I yet add the tender name of ſon,
A ſon who trembles for thee, who prefers
To Cæſar Rome alone, O hear, and ſave me!

CÆSAR.

Leave me, my Brutus, leave me.

BRUTUS.

Be perſuaded.

CÆSAR.

The world may change, but Cæſar never will.

BRUTUS.

This is thy anſwer then?

CÆSAR.

I am reſolv'd;
Rome muſt obey, when Cæſar hath determin'd.

BRUTUS.

Then fare thee well.

CÆSAR.

CÆSAR.

Ha! wherefore? ſtay, my ſon,
Thou weep'ſt, can Brutus weep? is it becauſe
Thou ha'ſt a king? doſt thou lament for Rome?

BRUTUS.

I weep for thee, and thee alone; farewell!

[Exit Brutus.

CÆSAR.

Heroic virtue! how I envy Brutus!
Wou'd I cou'd love like him the commonweal!

SCENE V.

CÆSAR, DOLABELLA, ROMANS.

DOLABELLA.

Cæſar, the ſenate, at the temple met
By thy command, await thee, and the throne
Already is prepar'd, the people throng
Around thy ſtatues, and the ſenate fix
Their wav'ring minds; but, if I might be heard,
If Cæſar wou'd give ear to one who loves him,
A fellow-ſoldier and a friend, to augurs,
To dreadful omens, to the gods themſelves,
He wou'd defer the great event.

CÆSAR.

Away:

Defer ſuch glorious buſineſs! loſe a crown,
What pow'r ſhall ſtop me?

DOLABELLA.

Nature doth conſpire
With heav'n to blaſt thy purpoſe, and foretell
Thy death.

CÆSAR.

No matter, Cæſar's but a man;
Nor do I think that heav'n wou'd e'er diſturb
The courſe of nature, or the elements
Riſe in confuſion, to prolong the life
Of one poor mortal; by th' immortal gods
Our days are number'd; we muſt yield to fate;
Cæſar has nought to fear.

DOLABELLA.

Cæſar has foes,
And this new yoke may gall them; what if theſe
Conſpire againſt thee?

CÆSAR.

O, they dare not do it.

DOLABELLA.

Thy heart's too confident.

CÆSAR.

Such poor precautions

Wou'd

Wou'd make me look contemptible; perhaps
Wou'd do me little ſervice.

DOLABELLA.

For Rome's ſafety
Cæſar ſhou'd live: at leaſt permit thy friend
T' attend thee to the ſenate.

CÆSAR.

No: why alter
Our firſt reſolve? why haſten the decrees
Of fate? who changes only ſhews his weakneſs.

DOLABELLA.

I quit thee with regret, and own I fear.
Alas! my heart beats heavily.

CÆSAR.

Away.
Better to die than be afraid of death:
Farewell.

SCENE VI.

DOLABELLA, ROMANS.

DOLABELLA.

What hero better cou'd deſerve
The homage of mankind? O join with me,
Ye Romans, to admire and honour Cæſar;

Live to obey, and die to ſerve him——heav'n!
What noiſe is that, what dreadful clamours!

The CONSPIRATORS, behind the ſcenes.

Die,
Die, tyrant: courage, Caſſius.

DOLABELLA.

Fly, and ſave him.

SCENE VII.

CASSIUS, a dagger in his hand, DOLABELLA, ROMANS.

CASSIUS.

The deed is done: he's dead.

DOLABELLA.

Aſſiſt me, Romans,
Strike, kill the traitor.

CASSIUS.

Hear me, countrymen,
I am your friend, and your deliverer,
Have broke your chains, and ſet the nation free:
The conqu'rors of the world are now the ſons
Of liberty.

DOLABELLA.

O! Romans, ſhall the blood
Of Cæſar——

CASSIUS.

I have ſlain my friend, to ſerve

The

The cauſe of Rome; he wou'd have made you ſlaves,
And therefore have I ſlain him: is there one,
Amongſt you all, ſo baſe, ſo mean of ſoul,
As to be fond of ſlav'ry, and regret
A tyrant's loſs? is there one Roman left
That wiſhes for a king? if one there be,
Let him appear, let him complain to Caſſius;
But ye are fond of glory all, I know
Ye are, and will applaud me for the deed.

ROMANS.

Periſh his mem'ry! Cæſar was a tyrant.

CASSIUS.

Preſerve theſe gen'rous ſentiments, ye ſons
Of happy Rome, ye maſters of the world;
Antony means, I know, to tamper with you,
But you'll remember, he was Cæſar's ſlave,
Bred up beneath him from his infant years,
And in corruption's ſchool has learn'd from him
The tyrant's art; he comes to vindicate
His maſter, and to juſtify his crimes;
Contemns you all, and thinks he can deceive you:
He has a right to ſpeak, and muſt be heard,
Such is the law of Rome, and to the laws
I ſhall ſubmit; but in the people ſtill

Is lodg'd the pow'r ſupreme, to judge of Cæſar,
Of Antony, and me: ye now once more
Poſſeſs thoſe rights which had been wreſted from you,
Which Cæſar took, and Caſſius hath reſtor'd:
He will confirm them: but I go, my friends,
To meet great Brutus at the capitol;
To thoſe deſerted walls once more to bring
Long abſent juſtice, and our exil'd gods;
To calm the rage of faction, and repair
The ruins of our liberty: for you,
I aſk you but to know your happineſs,
And to enjoy it: let no artifice
Deceive you, but beware of Antony.

ROMANS.

If he ſpeak ill of Caſſius, he ſhall die.

CASSIUS.

Romans, remember theſe your ſacred oaths.

ROMANS.

The friends of Rome ſhall ever be our care.

SCENE VIII.

ANTONY, ROMANS, DOLABELLA.

First ROMAN.

But Antony appears.

Second

Second ROMAN.

What can he dare
To offer?

First ROMAN.

See, his eyes are bath'd in tears;
Hark, how he ſighs, he's deeply troubled.

Second ROMAN.

O,
He lov'd him but too well.

ANTONY.

I did indeed;
I lov'd him, Romans, wou'd have giv'n my life
To ſave my friend's; and who amongſt you all
Wou'd not have dy'd for Cæſar, had you known,
Like me, his virtues? to the laws he fell
A noble ſacrifice: I come not here
To gild his mem'ry with a flatt'ring tale,
The world was witneſs to his deeds, the world
Proclaims his glory; I but aſk your pity,
And beg you to forgive the tears of friendſhip.

First ROMAN.

Caſſius, you might have ſhed them for your country,
For Rome in ſlav'ry; Cæſar was a hero,
But Cæſar was a tyrant too.

Second ROMAN.

A tyrant Cou'd

Cou'd have no virtues: Caſſius was our friend,
And ſo was Brutus.

ANTONY.

I have nought to urge
Againſt his murtherers; they meant, no doubt,
To ſerve the ſtate; whilſt gen'rous Cæſar pour'd
His bounties on their heads, they ſhed his blood;
But, had he not been guilty, Rome wou'd ne'er
Have acted thus, he muſt have been to blame:
And yet, did Cæſar ever make you groan
Beneath his pow'r? did he oppreſs his country?
Did he reſerve the fruit of all his conqueſts
But for himſelf, or did you ſhare the ſpoil?
Were not the treaſures of the conquer'd world
Laid at your feet, and laviſh'd all on you?
When he beheld his weeping countrymen,
From his triumphal car he wou'd deſcend
To ſooth their griefs, and wipe their tears away.
What Cæſar fought for, Rome in peace enjoys;
Rich by his bounty, by his virtues great;
He paid the ſervice and forgot the wrongs
Which he receiv'd; immortal gods! you knew
His heart was ever ready to forgive.

ROMANS.

Cæſar was always merciful. ANTO-

ANTONY.

Alas!

Cou'd his great ſoul have ever ſtoop'd to vengeance
He yet had liv'd, and we had ſtill been happy.
Not one of all his murtherers but ſhar'd
His bounties; twice had he preſerv'd the life
Of Caſſius — Brutus — horrible to think!
O, heav'n! my friends, I ſhudder at the crime,
The baſe aſſaſſin, Brutus, was — his ſon.

ROMANS.

His ſon! ye gods!

ANTONY.

I ſee, it ſhocks your ſouls,
I ſee the tears that trickle down your cheeks:
Yes; Brutus is his ſon: but you, my friends,
You were his children, his adopted ſons:
O, had ye ſeen his will!

ROMANS.

What is it? tell us.

ANTONY.

Rome is his heir; his treaſures are your own,
And you will ſoon enjoy them: O, he wiſh'd
To ſerve his Romans, ev'n beyond the grave:
'Twas you alone he lov'd, for you had gone
To ſacrifice his fortune and his life

In

In Aſia's plains: O, Romans, oft he cry'd,
You are my ſov'reigns, I am the world's maſter,
And you are mine. Cou'd Brutus have done more,
Or Caſſius?

ROMANS.

We deteſt them.

First ROMAN.

Cæſar was
The father of his country.

ANTONY.

But he's gone;
Your father is no more: the pride, the glory
Of human nature, the delight of Rome,
Cut off by vile Aſſaſſins; ſhall he go
Unhonour'd, undiſtinguiſh'd to the tomb?
Shall we not raiſe the fun'ral pile to one
So dear, the father, and the friend of Rome?
Behold, they bring him here.

[The further part of the ſtage opens, and diſcovers the lictors carrying the body of Cæſar, cover'd with a bloody robe; Antony deſcends from the roſtrum, and kneels down near the body.

ROMANS.

O dreadful ſight!

ANTONY.

Behold the poor remains of Cæſar! once
The firſt of men, that god whom you ador'd,

Whom

Whom ev'n his murth'rers lov'd, your beſt ſupport,
In peace your guardian, and in war your glory,
Who made whole nations tremble, and the world
Bow down before him: is this he, ye Romans,
This bleeding corſe, is this the mighty Cæſar?
Mark but his wounds: *here Cimber pierc'd him, there
The perjur'd Caſſius, and there Decimus;
There, with unnat'ral hand, the cruel Brutus
Deep plung'd the fatal poniard: Cæſar look'd
Towards his murth'rer, with an eye of love
And mild forgiveneſs, as he ſunk in death
He call'd him by the tender name of ſon;
My child, he cry'd ——

First ROMAN.

The monſter! O that heav'n
Had ta'en him hence before this fatal deed!

[The people crowd round the body.

The blood ſtill flows.

ANTONY.

O! it cries out for vengeance:
From you demands it: hearken to the voice;

* The reader will perceive how cloſely Voltaire has here ſollow'd Shakeſpear, and at the ſame time muſt obſerve how inferior the copy is to the great original.

Awake,

Awake, ye Romans, hence, and follow me
Againſt theſe vile Aſſaſſins; the beſt tribute
That we can pay to Cæſar's memory,
Is to extirpate theſe uſurpers: haſte,
And with the torch that lights his fun'ral pile
Set fire to ev'ry traitors houſe, and plunge
Your daggers in their breaſts: away, my friends,
Let us avenge him; let us offer up
Their bloody victims to the gods of Rome.

ROMAN.

We follow you, and swear by Cæſar's blood
To be revenged: away.

ANTONY. [to Dolabella

We muſt not let
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible] THIRD [illegible] ACT.

AMELIA:

OR, THE

DUKE OF FOIX.

A

TRAGEDY.

Repreſented in December, 1752.

Awake, ye Romans, hence, and follow me
Againſt theſe vile Aſſaſſins; the beſt tribute
That we can pay to Cæſar's memory,
Is to extirpate theſe uſurpers: haſte,
And with the torch that lights his fun'ral pile
Set fire to ev'ry traitors houſe, and plunge
Your daggers in their breaſts: away, my friends,
Let us avenge him; let us offer up
Theſe bloody victims to the gods of Rome.

ROMAN.

We follow thee, and ſwear by Cæſar's blood
To be reveng'd: away.

ANTONY. [to Dolabella.

We muſt not let
Their anger cool, the multitude we know
Is ever wav'ring, fickle, and inconſtant:
We'll urge them to a war, and then perhaps
Who beſt revenges Cæſar may ſucceed him.

END of the THIRD and laſt ACT.

AMELIA:

OR, THE

DUKE OF FOIX.

A

TRAGEDY.

Repreſented in December, 1752.

PREFACE.

THIS tragedy is founded on hiſtorical truth. A Duke of Britany, in the year 1387, commanded the lord of *Bavalan* to aſſaſſinate the conſtable of *Cliſſon*: *Bavalan*, the day after, told the duke it was done: the duke becoming ſenſible of the horror of his crime, and apprehenſive of the fatal conſequences of it, abandon'd himſelf to the moſt violent deſpair; *Bavalan*, after giving him time to repent, at length told him that he had lov'd him well enough to diſobey his orders, &c.

The action is tranſported to another age and country for particular reaſons.

DRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The DUKE of FOIX.

AMELIA.

VAMIR, Brother to the Duke of Foix.

LISOIS.

THAIS, Confidant of Amelia.

EMAR, Friend of Vamir.

SCENE, the PALACE of the DUKE of FOIX.

AMELIA:

OR, THE

DUKE OF FOIX.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

AMELIA, LISOIS.

LISOIS.

PErmit a ſoldier, in this ſeat of war,
To ſteal a moment from the battle's rage,
And greet the fair Amelia; to the king
Thy noble heart is bound, I know, by ties
Of deareſt friendſhip; long and faithfully
Hath Liſois ſerv'd the valiant duke of Foix
Who holds thee here a pris'ner: well I know
The violence of his paſſion for Amelia,

Foreſee

Foreſee the dreadful conſequence, and come,
With all the warmth of friendſhip, to adviſe
And to conſult, to lay my heart before thee,
Perhaps 'tis not unworthy of thy notice.

AMELIA.

The ſeal of truth is ever on thy lips,
I know thy firm integrity; whate'er
Thou ſay'ſt, I ſhall believe.

LISOIS.

Know then, tho' long
I've ſerv'd the duke with moſt unweary'd zeal,
Through years of peril, and unnumber'd toils,
Yet cou'd I ne'er approve the fatal league
That bound him to the Moor, and took from Franc
The nobleſt of her princes; in theſe days
Of public diſcord, I have rang'd myſelf
Beneath no banners but what honour rais'd,
And follow'd but the dictates of my heart:
Not that, the ſlave of prejudice, my ſoul
Is blind to all the errors of a friend;
With grief I ſee the duke's impatient warmth,
Th' impetuous ardor of his boiling youth,
I cannot ſhut my eyes againſt his follies:
Oft times the torren. which I ſtrive to ſtop

Mor

Mocks my weak pow'r, and throws down all before it;
But he has virtues that will recompenſe
His worſt of faults: if we muſt follow none
But perfect princes, whoſe unbiaſs'd hearts
Are free from ev'ry vice, and ev'ry weakneſs,
Whom ſhall we ſerve? I love the duke; and yet
'Tis with regret I draw the hoſtile ſword
'Gainſt France: I wiſh he cou'd be reconcil'd.

AMELIA.

If that cou'd e'er be done, thy influence beſt
Might reunite them: if he loves his glory,
Sure this miſguided prince will liſten to thee.
How fatal has his error been!

LISOIS.

In vain
I've try'd to bend his haughty ſpirit; oft
Have I with harſh unwelcome truths attack'd him,
And ſorely pierc'd his heart: but thou alone
Can'ſt bring him to his duty, and his king:
That was my errand here: there was a time
When on the fair Amelia I had plac'd
My hopes of bliſs; without abaſement then
I thought you might have liſten'd to my vows;
But heav'n reſerv'd thee for a nobler fate.

Whilſt I was abſent, by the cruel Moors
Thou wert enſlav'd; the happy conqu'ror came,
The gallant Foix, and ſav'd thee from their rage;
His was the glory, his be the reward:
His claims are ſtrong, his youth, his rank, and pow
His fame, and ſervices, all plead for him;
Amelia's juſtice and her gratitude
Muſt bind her to him: I have no pretence,
And therefore I am ſilent; but if merit
Cou'd make thee mine, I wou'd diſpute the prize
Ev'n with the ſons of kings, nor yield Amelia
To any but to him: he is my maſter,
My leader, and my friend; he loves me well:
I am not a half proud half virtuous lover,
But what I ſtill wou'd litigate with pow'r,
I give to friendſhip: nay, I can do more,
I can ſubdue the weakneſs of my heart,
And plead a rival's cauſe; point out the path
Of glory to thee, ſhew thee what is due
To that illuſtrious hero who preſerv'd thee,
By whom thou liv'ſt: I can behold unmov'd,
And with unenvying eye, thy charms beſtow'd
On him who beſt deſerves them: take my heart
Between you, and accept my honeſt ſervice,
This arm ſhall fight for both; I ſacrifice

My paſſions to your int'reſt: friendſhip bids me,
And I obey; my country too commands:
Remember, if the prince is yours, he ſoon
Will be the king's.

AMELIA.

Thy virtues, noble youth,
Aſtoniſh me; thou giv'ſt th'admiring world
A rare example; canſt thou be ſincere?
And ſure thou art ſo, thus to conquer love,
And give up all to friendſhip! all who know
Muſt wonder at thee: thou haſt ſerv'd thy maſter,
And can'ſt not be an enemy to mine:
A heart ſo gen'rous ſure muſt think with me:
'Tis not in ſoul's like thine to hate their king.
Shall I then aſk one favour at thy hands?

LISOIS.

Amelia's orders ſhall be ever ſacred:
Command, and I obey.

AMELIA.

Thy gen'rous counſel
Hath urg'd me to accept a noble rank
I look'd not for, and offer'd by a prince:
The choice, I own, does honour to Amelia,
When I reflect, that, long before he told

His love, he ſav'd my liberty and life;
Foe to his ſov'reign, tho' the rebel Moor
Hath drawn him from his duty and allegiance,
Yet he has pour'd ſo many favors on me,
I cannot bear to hurt him, tho', in ſpite
Of all his goodneſs, and my gratitude,
I muſt refuſe him: his unhappy paſſion
Afflicts me; 'tis diſtreſsful to my heart,
For all his kindneſs thus to make him wretched.
Fain wou'd I ſpare myſelf th'ungrateful taſk
Of ſaying that I muſt not hear his vows:
It is not for my feeble voice to tell
A prince his duty; 'twere a dangrous pow'r,
And I am far from wiſhing to enjoy it;
Who can direct him better than thyſelf?
Alas! my lord, 'tis not a time for love;
The royal army at our gates, and nought
But war and ſlaughter all around us: blood
On every ſide! himſelf againſt my maſter,
Againſt his brother, now in arms; all theſe
Are pow'rful reaſons: O, my lord, in you
Is all my hope; forgive me; O complete
The gen'rous work, reſtore me to my king;
Let him do that, 'tis all I aſk; but add
This effort more to what thou'ſt done already:

Thou haſt the ſtrongeſt influence o'er his heart,
A firm and manly ſoul; a friend like thee,
Reſpected and belov'd, will make the voice
Of duty heard, his counſels will be laws.

LISOIS.

Alas! thoſe counſels will have little weight
Againſt the paſſions that poſſeſs his ſoul;
His fiery temper gives me too much cauſe
To fear him: he's inclin'd to jealouſy,
And if he hears I had a thought of thee,
'Twill drive his ſoul to madneſs, and perhaps
Undo us all: he muſt be ſooth'd by art;
Leave him to me, and try to reconcile
Your jarring int'reſts; weigh his offers well.
Henceforth I'll think no more of love and thee,
But get me to the field, the ſoldier's duty
Shall there engroſs me: if thou lov'ſt thy country,
If France be dear to thee, reſtore her hero,
And ſhe will bleſs thee for the deed: farewell.

SCENE II.

AMELIA, THAIS.

AMELIA.

Reſtore him, ſaid he? what! at the dear price
Of all my happineſs! it cannot be;
'T'were infamous and baſe, the worſt of crimes.

THAIS.

But wherefore is the prince thus hateful to you?
Why in theſe days of diſcord, war, and tumult,
Whilſt faction reigns, and on our royal race
Brother 'gainſt brother arms, and ev'ry hour
Brings new afflictions, wherefore ſhou'd Amelia,
Whoſe gentler ſtars for other purpoſes
Had form'd her ſoul, to love and to be lov'd,
Why ſhou'd Amelia, with ſuch ſentiments
Of ſcorn and hatred, meet a hero's vows
Who had aveng'd her cauſe? The prince, thou know'ſt,
Amongſt his anceſtors can boaſt the blood
Of our firſt kings, and is himſelf a lord
Of rich domains, and wide-extended pow'r.
He loves you, offers you his hand: can rank
And title, objects that are envy'd ſtill
By all mankind, purſued with eagerneſs,

And

And gain'd with rapture, can theſe only fill
Thy heart with ſorrow, and thy eyes with tears?

AMELIA.

Becauſe he ſav'd me once, has he a right
Now to oppreſs me? Muſt Amelia fall
A victim to his fatal aid? I know
I'm much indebted to him, wou'd I were not!

THAIS.

Nay, that's ungrateful.

AMELIA.

Thou ſhalt know my heart,
My miſeries, my duty, and my fate:
I will no longer keep the ſecret from thee,
'Twere cruel to diſtruſt thee; when thou know'ſt
My ſtory, thou may'ſt juſtify thy friend.
I muſt not liſten to the prince's vows,
For know, my heart is given to his brother.

THAIS.

Ha! to the noble Vamir!

AMELIA.

Yes, my friend:
With mutual oaths we ſeal'd our mutual faith,
And at Leucate I expected him,

There to confirm it at the holy altar,
When by the cruel Moors that ruſh'd upon us
I was ſurpris'd, and made a captive; then
The prince, to theſe unconquer'd ſavages
In firm alliance bound, appear'd, and ſav'd me;
There's my diſtreſs: the life another ſav'd
Muſt be devoted to the faithful Vamir.

THAIS.

But why then thus conceal thy paſſion? why
Nouriſh a hopeleſs flame thou ſhoud'ſt extinguiſh?
He wou'd reſpect this ſacred tie, and check
His fruitleſs paſſion.

AMELIA.

O I muſt not tell him:
The brothers, to compleat my ſorrows, arm'd
Againſt each other, have ta'en different parties
In this deſtructive war; the faithful Vamir
Fights for his king. Thou know'ſt the violence
Of his proud rival: all I can oppoſe
To his fierce rage is melancholy ſilence;
Ev'n yet he knows not that in happier times
The gallant Vamir had engag'd my heart:
To tell it him wou'd fire his jealous ſoul,
And only make Amelia more unhappy.
'Tis time to quit this fatal place, the king

With pleaſure will receive me: let us hence,
The priſ'ners, Thais, from theſe walls ev'n now
Are breaking forth, and meditate their flight:
They will conduct us: I defy all danger,
Will hazard all for freedom and repoſe.

THAIS.

Behold the Duke.

AMELIA.

I cannot ſpeak to him,
The ſtarting tear wou'd ſoon betray me: what
Wou'd I not give for ever to avoid him!

SCENE III.

DUKE of FOIX, LISOIS, THAIS.

DUKE. [to Thais.

Avoid me! fly me! Thais, ſtay: thou know'ſt
My ſorrows, know'ſt I love her to diſtraction;
My life depends on her: but let her not
Abuſe her pow'r, and drive me to deſpair:
I hate her cold reſpect, her poor return
Of gratitude to all my warmth of paſſion:
Delay is cruel, 'tis the worſt refuſal;
'Tis an affront my heart will ne'er forgive:
In vain ſhe boaſts to me her loyal zeal,
Her fond attachments to her royal maſter,

'Tis time that all ſhou'd yield to love and me:
Here let her find her country and her king;
To me ſhe owes her honour, and her life;
And I owe all to her, I owe my love:
United as we are by ev'ry claim,
We muſt not part, the altar is prepar'd,
She ſhall be mine; go, tell her all is ready.

SCENE IV.

The DUKE, LISOIS.

LISOIS.

My lord, remember that our kingdom's ſafety
Depends on this deciſive day.

DUKE.

I know it
And am reſolv'd to conquer or to die
Amelia's huſband.

LISOIS.

But the foe advances,
And ſoon will be upon us.

DUKE.

Let him come,
I mean to fight him; think'ſt thou I'm a coward?
Think'ſt thou the tyrant love ſhall e'er extinguiſh
My noble thirſt of glory? though ſhe hates,
She ſhall admire me ſtill: ſhe boaſts indeed

Her ſov'reign empire o'er my captive heart,
But ſhall not blaſt my virtue and my fame.
No: thy reproaches are unjuſt, my friend
Was too ſevere; condemn me not unjuſtly,
Love ne'er unnerves the gallant ſons of France;
Ev'n from the boſom of ſucceſs and joy,
Fearleſs they fly to arms, and ruſh on death:
And I too will die worthy of Amelia.

LISOIS.

Say rather, worthy of thyſelf: I think
To day of nothing but the public welfare;
I talk of battles, and thou ſpeak'ſt of love.
My lord, I've ſeen the army of the foe:
Vamir, ſo fame reports, is arm'd againſt us:
From us, I know, he hath long ſince withdrawn
His valiant troops, I know him not, but hear
He's of a noble nature: if his ſoul,
Inſpir'd by duty, and by glory warm'd,
Still feels the tender tie that link'd your hearts
In earlier years, he may aſſiſt us now,
And be the means of making wiſh'd-for peace.
My cares———

DUKE.

Away: I wou'd not be oblig'd
Thus to a brother: ſhall I ſue for peace,

Entreat

And aſk forgiveneſs? yet it hurts my ſoul
To think that Vamir is my foe: I ſtill
Remember our paſt friendſhip, and the love
I bore him once; but ſince he will oppoſe me,
Since he's no longer ours, why let him go,
And ſerve his king.

LISOIS.

Thy fiery temper braves
Too far the patience of an eaſy monarch.

DUKE.

A monarch! the mere phantom of a king,
Unworthy of his race, a royal ſlave,
In golden chains, and ſeated on a throne
Subjected to a petty officer:
I'm not afraid of Pepin their arch-tyrant;
I hate a ſubject that wou'd frighten me,
And I deſpiſe a king who can't command:
If he permits a rebel to uſurp
The ſov'reign pow'r, I'll ſtill ſupport my own:
This heart's too proud to bend beneath the laws
Of theſe new upſtarts who oppreſs their king:
Clovis, my royal anceſtor, ne'er taught
His ſons to cringe beneath a haughty maſter,
At leaſt theſe faithful Arabs will revenge me;
If I muſt feel a tyrant, let him be
A ſtranger.

LISOIS.

LISOIS.

You deteſt theſe* governors,
But they have ſav'd our empire, which your friends,
The Arabs, but for them had overthrown:
I tremble at this new alliance: Spain
Before you ſtands a terrible example:
Theſe ſavage plund'rers, theſe new tyrants dig
Our graves with our own hands. 'Twere better far
To yield with prudence.

DUKE.

What, fall down and ſue
For mercy!

LISOIS.

Your true int'reſt long forgotten——

DUKE.

Revenge is my firſt int'reſt.

LISOIS.

Love and anger
Too long have rul'd the boſom of my friend.

DUKE.

I know they have, but cannot conquer nature.

* The original is 'vous haïſſez un Maire' literally tranſlated you hate a *Mayor*. *Maire* may perhaps ſound very well in a *French* ear, but in *Engliſh* it is rather unpoetical, and ſo far beneath the dignity of the Buſkin, that I am not certain whether the ſingle word *Mayor*, repeated two or three times, wou'd not throw an air of ridicule over a whole ſcene, and perhaps contribute in a great meaſure to damn a modern tragedy.

LISOIS.

LISOIS.

You may, you ought; nay, I'll not flatter you,
But ev'n, tho' I condemn, I'll follow thee;
'Tis a friend's duty to point out the faults
Of him he loves; to counſel, to exhort,
To ſave him from the dang'rous precipice:
This I have done for thee, but thou wilt fall,
And I muſt periſh with thee.

DUKE.

O my friend,
What haſt thou ſaid?

LISOIS.

But what I ought to ſay:
And wou'd to heav'n that thou had'ſt liſten'd to me!
What doſt thou purpoſe?

DUKE.

When my ardent hopes
Shall be fulfill'd, when the ungrateful maid
Shall give ſweet peace to my diſtracted mind,
Then will I hear the counſels of my friend.
What can I purpoſe now, or what deſign,
Till I have ſeen the tyrant who muſt guide
My future fate? let her determine for me,
Let her ſave me, and I will ſave my country.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

The DUKE of FOIX alone.

She cannot ſure again refuſe to ſee me,
And urge me to deſpair! ſhe dare not do it:
Fool that I am to give her thus the pow'r,
How weak is my proud heart to yield itſelf
A voluntary ſlave! go, throw thyſelf,
Mean as thou art, beneath the tyrant's feet;
Go, make thy life dependant on a word,
A look, a ſmile, from proud Amelia; paſs
From love to fury, and from tears to rage;
'Tis the laſt time I e'er will ſpeak to her.
I go———

SCENE II.

The DUKE, AMELIA, and THAIS, who advance from the upper end of the ſtage.

AMELIA.

There's hope, my Thais; yet I tremble.
Wou'd Vamir hazard this bold enterpriſe?
'Tis full of danger; ha! what do I ſee?

[advancing towards the Duke.

DUKE.

Amelia, what hath this way led thy ſteps
I know not, but thy eyes too plainly tell me

That

That I was not the object of their ſearch:
What! ſtill turn from me, ſtill inſult the heart
That dotes upon thee! cruel tyrant, thus
To blaſt the laurels planted on my brow:
O if Amelia's hand had plac'd them there
They might have flouriſh'd, but ſhe has forgot
Her plighted faith, and broke her flatt'ring promiſe.

AMELIA.

Thou never hadſt my faith, I never gave
Thee promiſe, gratitude is all I owe thee.

DUKE.

Did I not offer thee my hand?

AMELIA.

Thou didſt:
It was an honour which I cou'd not merit,
And which I never ſought, but I receiv'd it
With due reſpect; you thought, no doubt, a rank
So glorious muſt have dazzled poor Amelia.
At length, my lord, 'tis time to undeceive you;
I do it with regret, becauſe I know
It will offend you, but I muſt be plain:
In ſhort, my lord, I love my king too well
To think of wedding with his foe: thy blood

I know

I know, is noble; mine is ſpotleſs yet,
Nor will be ſtain'd with foul diſloyalty,
And I inherit from my anceſtors
The fix'd abhorrence of my country's foes:
Nor will I e'er acknowledge for a maſter
The friend of tyrants, be he e'er ſo great:
Such is my firm reſolve; perhaps, my lord,
It may ſeem harſh, but you oblig'd me to it.

DUKE.

This is a language, madam, which I own
I look'd not for; I never cou'd have thought
That angry heav'n, to make me doubly wretched,
Wou'd chooſe Amelia for its inſtrument
Of vengeance: you have ſtudy'd long in ſecret
The arts of black ingratitude, of ſcorn
And inſult, and now open all your heart.
I was a ſtranger to this patriot zeal,
This moſt heroic ardor for thy country,
This fetch of policy; but tell me, madam,
Whom have you here but this inſulted lover,
The injur'd Foix, to ſuccour and ſupport you?
Thou haſt reproach'd me with my new alliance,
Thoſe faithful friends on whom I here rely
For all my ſafety, and for all my pow'r:
Without their aid thou had'ſt been ſtill a captive;

To

To them you ow'd your liberty and life,
And am I thus rewarded?

AMELIA.

You prolong'd
My wretched days; but are they therefore yours,
And may I not diſpoſe them as I pleaſe?
Did you preſerve me but to make me wretched,
To be a tyrant o'er the life you ſav'd?

DUKE.

Ungrateful woman, thou deſerv'ſt the name
Of tyrant moſt, for now I read thy ſoul,
See thro' the thin diſguiſe, behold too plainly
My own diſhonour, and thy treach'rous falſehood:
I know thou lov'ſt another, but whoe'er
He be that thus hath robb'd me of thy heart,
Fear thou my love, and tremble at my rage;
For, if he be on earth, I'll find the traitor,
And tear him from thee: if amidſt its horrors
My ſoul cou'd feel one momentary joy,
'Twou'd be to make thee wretched.

AMELIA.

No: my lord,
Indeed it wou'd not; reaſon will forbid it:
Thy ſoul's too noble to oppreſs with woe
A life which thou had'ſt ſav'd; but if thy heart

Shou'd

Shou'd ever ſtoop ſo low, thy virtues ſtill,
Thy goodneſs in my memory ſhall live,
And only thy unkindneſs be forgotten.
I pity, and forgive thee; thou wilt bluſh
Hereafter at the thought of inj'ring me;
Spite of thy threats, my ſoul is yet unmov'd,
Nor dreads thy anger, nor defies thy pow'r.

DUKE.

Forgive the tranſports of a mind diſturb'd,
The rage of love embitter'd by deſpair;
Liſois, I find, holds ſecret conf'rence with you,
Abetts your falſehood, and defends your conduct;
Leans to the royal party, and combines
In vain with you to make a convert of me:
It ſeems I'm to be govern'd by your will,
And not my own: your converſe is the ſame,
The ſame your purpoſe; but why uſe theſe arms
Againſt me? to perſuade my eaſy heart,
Why muſt Amelia ſeek a ſtranger's aid?
A word will win me, if 'tis ſpoke by love.

AMELIA.

My heart, I own, hath open'd to thy friend
Its hopes and fears, but he hath done much more
Than he had promis'd: pity then my tears,
Pity my ſorrows, be thyſelf again;

Subdue

Subdue a paſſion which Amelia muſt not,
Cannot return: accept my gratitude,
'Tis all I have to give thee.

DUKE.

Liſois then,
And he alone, enjoys thy confidence,
Thy friendſhip, more perhaps; I ſee it now.

AMELIA.

You may perhaps hereafter, but at preſent
You have no right, ſir, to controul my thoughts,
My actions, or my words; no right to blame me,
Or to complain: I ſought thy friend's aſſiſtance,
And he has giv'n it me; I wiſh, my lord,
That you wou'd learn to act and think like him.

SCENE III.

The Duke alone.

'Tis well: this baſe ungrateful perjur'd woman,
Without a bluſh, confeſſes all her falſehood;
The myſt'ry is unfolded now: one friend,
One only friend, I had, and he deſtroys me.
Friendſhip! vain phantom, unſubſtantial ſhade,
So often ſought for, and ſo ſeldom found,
Thou ever hadſt ſome wholeſome draught to pour
Into my cup of ſorrow; but at laſt

Thou

Thou too, like love, haſt cruelly deceiv'd me!
For the reward of all my errors paſt
I have but this, that no allurements now,
No flatt'ring pleaſures, henceforth ſhall betray me;
For from this hour I will be fond—of nothing.
But lo the traitor comes with cruel hand
To tear my wounds, and make them bleed afreſh.

SCENE IV.

LISOIS.

My lord, I come obedient to your orders:
But why that frown, thoſe eyes of diſcontent
That ſcowl upon me? has thy ſoul, long time
The ſport of paſſion, weigh'd in reaſon's ſcale
Thy int'reſt, and thy happineſs?

DUKE.

It has.

LISOIS.

And what was the reſult?

DUKE.

My eyes are open'd
To falſehood and deceit; I've learn'd to find
A rival and a traitor in my friend.

LISOIS.

How's that!

DUKE.

It is enough.

LISOIS.

LISOIS.

Too much, my lord:
Who is the traitor?

DUKE.

Can'ſt thou aſk me who?
Who but thyſelf was privy to the wrongs
I have receiv'd, who elſe muſt anſwer for them?
I know, Amelia hath convers'd with thee
Here, in the palace; when I mention'd thee
She trembled: this affected ſilence ſpeaks
Your guilt more plainly, and I know not which
Moſt to abhor, Amelia, or —— my friend.

LISOIS.

Can'ſt thou yet liſten to that friend?

DUKE.

I can.

LISOIS.

Think'ſt thou I ſtill am anxious for my fame?
Doſt thou eſteem, and can'ſt thou yet believe me?

DUKE.

I will: for till this hour I thought thee virtuous,
And held thee for my friend.

LISOIS.

Thoſe noble titles
Have hitherto conducted me thro' life;

But wherefore juſtify myſelf to thee?
Thou'ſt not deſerv'd it: know, Amelia's charms
Long ſince had touch'd my heart, before thy hand
Had ſet her free, and ſav'd her precious life,
But by the ties of gratitude ſhe's thine;
Thou haſt deſerv'd her by thy ſervices:
For me, I'm more the ſoldier than the ſoft
And tender lover; I deſpiſe the art
Of baſe ſeduction, fit for courts alone,
And flatt'ry's ſmooth perfidiouſneſs; my ſoul
Is made of firmer ſtuff: I talk'd indeed
Of marriage to her; and that ſacred tie,
Knit by eſteem and fair equality
Of fortune and condition, might have made her
More happy far than rank and titles cou'd,
That ſtand upon a dang'rous precipice:
But yeſternight, you know, I viſited
Your ramparts, when your jealous ſoul alarm'd
Diſcover'd all its paſſion: I obſerv'd it:
To day I ſaw the object of your grief,
Your lov'd Amelia, and beheld her charms
With eyes of cold indiff'rence: o'er myſelf
I gain'd an eaſy conqueſt: I did more,
Pleaded for thee, for an ungrateful friend,
And urg'd a paſſion which I can't approve;

Recall'd

Recall'd the mem'ry of thy bounties paſt,
Thy glory and thy rank, acknowledg'd faults
I knew you had, and number'd all your virtues;
All this againſt myſelf I did for thee;
For my friend's happineſs gave up my own:
And if the ſacrifice is ſtill imperfect,
Shew me the rival that ſtill dares t'oppoſe thee,
And I will ſtake my life to do thee juſtice.

DUKE.

My friend, thou ſoar'ſt above me; I am fall'n,
Abaſh'd, confounded: who cou'd ſee Amelia
And not adore her? but to conquer thus
Thy paſſion! O, thou never cou'dſt have lov'd her.

LISOIS.

I did: but love, like other paſſions, acts
With diff'rent force on diff'rent minds.

DUKE.

I love
Too well, my friend, and cannot imitate
The virtue I admire: my fooliſh heart——

LISOIS.

I aſk not for thy praiſes, but thy love;
And if thou think'ſt that I have merited
Aught at thy hands, O do but ſerve thyſelf,

Thy

Thy happineſs is Liſois' beſt reward.
Thou ſeeſt with what determin'd hate thy brother
Purſues the Moor, I dread the conſequence:
The people groan beneath this foreign yoke,
Soon, I foreſee, the empire will unite
Their ſcatter'd pow'rs, new enemies ſtill riſe
Againſt us, the pure blood of Clovis ſtill
Is worſhipp'd by the croud, and ſoon or late
The branches of this ſacred tree, that long
Have bent beneath the ſtorm, again ſhall riſe,
Spring with freſh verdure, and o'erſhade the land.
Plac'd by thy rank and fortunes near the throne,
Long time thou wer't thy king and country's friend;
But in the days of public diſcord, fate
Attach'd thee to another cauſe; perhaps
New int'reſts now may call for new connections,
And what united may diſſolve the tye;
The pow'r of theſe deſpotic governors
May be reſtrain'd, and weaken'd by thy hand——

DUKE.

I wiſh it were ſo: think'ſt thou then Amelia
Wou'd liſten to me? if I ſhou'd embrace
The royal party, might ſhe ſtill be mine?

LISOIS.

I am a ſtranger to Amelia's heart:

But what are her deſigns, her views to thee?
Muſt love alone decide the nation's fate?
In Touraine's field, when gallant Clovis fought,
And, o'er the haughty conquerors of Rome
Victorious, ſtopp'd the bloody Arian's hand,
That dealt deſtruction round us, did he ſave
His country, think'ſt thou, but to pleaſe a miſtreſs?
This arm againſt a rival is prepar'd
To ſerve my friend, but I wou'd ſerve him more,
Wou'd cure him of this fond deſtructive paſſion;
This love deceives us, we're too fearful of him;
We wound ourſelves, and lay the blame on him;
The coward's tyrant, and the hero's ſlave;
He may be conquer'd: Liſois has ſubdu'd him,
And ſhall he triumph o'er the blood of kings
Who never yet ſubmitted to a foe?
Awake, my friend, and be our great example
In ev'ry virtue!

DUKE.

Yes, I will do all,
All for Amelia: ſhe muſt yield at laſt.
Her laws, her king, her maſter, ſhall be mine:
I have no will but her, and in her eyes
Will read my duty, and my fate: poſſeſs'd
Of the dear treaſure, will be reconcil'd

To ev'ry foe. O how my heart enjoys
The pleaſing hope! I had no cauſe to fear,
I have no rival: if thou art not lov'd,
I can have none: who in this court wou'd dare
To caſt one look towards Amelia? now
Her vain pretexts are vaniſh'd: reaſon, glory,
My int'reſt, and my birth, the ſacred right
Of my great anceſtors, all all unite
To bind the nuptial chain, and make me happy.
Henceforth I am the king's, and will ſupport him;
So virtue bids, and beauty has commanded.
On this bleſt day will I confirm the oaths
I made to love: away, my friend, I leave
My int'reſt and my fortunes to thy care.

LISOIS.

Pemit me then, my lord, to ſeek the king:
I cou'd have wiſh'd that this important change
Were to the hero not the lover due;
But be it as it may, th'effect's too glorious
To blame the cauſe: I triumph in thy weakneſs,
And bleſs for once the lucky pow'r of love.

SCENE V.

The DUKE, LISOIS, an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

My Lord, the foe advances; we expect
A fierce aſſault, and wait your orders; time
Is precious.

DUKE.

Cruel fate! to counteract
My noble purpoſe! then farewell to peace,
And welcome, vict'ry! I'll deſerve Amelia:
I heed not theſe raſh fools: of all the foes
I have to conquer, there's but one to fear,
And that's — Amelia.

End of the Second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

DUKE of FOIX, LISOIS.

DUKE.

THE day is ours; thanks to thy friendly hand
That guided my raſh youth; thy noble ſoul,
In peace or war, is my beſt counſellor.

LISOIS.

LISOIS.

The glorious fire that animates thy heart
Muſt always conquer, when 'tis check'd by prudence,
As here it was: preſerve this happy virtue,
'Twill make thee happy, and 'twill make thee great;
The coward's reſtleſs, but the hero, calm.

DUKE.

How is the lover? can he ever taſte
Of ſweet tranquility? But ſay, my friend,
This unknown chief, that mounted on our ramparts,
And with his ſingle arm ſo long ſuſpended
The doubtful victʼry: I grew jealous of him:
Where is he? what became of him?

LISOIS.

Surrounded
By ſlaughter'd friends, alone long time he ſtood,
And brav'd oppoſing legions; but what moſt
Surpris'd us, when at length he had eſcap'd
From ev'ry danger, wond'rous to relate!
He yielded up himſelf a pris'ner to us;
Conceals his rank and name, accuſes heav'n,
And begs for inſtant death. One friend alone
Attends him, and partakes his ſorrows.

DUKE.

Liſois,

Who can this bold this fearleſs ſoldier be?
He wore his beaver down: ſome ſecret charm
O'erpower'd my trembling ſoul when I oppos'd him.
Whether this fatal paſſion that enſlaves me
Hath ſpred its weakneſs o'er each faculty,
And left the ſoft impreſſion on my ſoul,
Or that my bleeding country's voice alarm'd
This conſcious heart, and ſilently reproach'd me.

LISOIS.

As for the weakneſs of thy ſoul, advice
I know were vain, but ſure thy country's voice
May ſtill be heard; now is the time to ſhew
The greatneſs of thy ſoul, and give us peace.
Fortune, that ſmil'd on us to-day, perhaps
May frown to-morrow, and thy pride be forc'd
To ſue for pardon to a haughty foe.
Since thou art happy, and Amelia's thine,
Now reſt thy glory on the common cauſe,
This brave unknown may forward our deſigns;
Let us improve the lucky moment.

DUKE.

Yes,
My friend, I will do all to ſerve Amelia,

Her cauſe is mine: I muſt prepare the minds
Of my brave followers for the change; to thee,
And to thy happy counſels, ev'ry bliſs,
Glory and peace, and hymenaal joys,
To thee I owe, to friendſhip and to love.

SCENE II.

LISOIS, VAMIR, and EMAR at the further end of the ſtage.

LISOIS.

It is the noble pris'ner, and his friend,
If I miſtake not: this way they advance;
He ſeems o'erwhelm'd with deep diſpair.

VAMIR.

O heav'n!
Where am I? whether doſt thou lead me?

LISOIS.

Stranger,
Whoe'er thou art, be comforted; thy fate
Hath thrown thee into noble hands: thou'lt find
A gen'rous maſter, who can ſee deſert
Ev'n in a foe: may I not aſk thy name?

VAMIR.

I am a poor abandon'd wretch, the ſport
Of fortune, one whoſe leaſt affliction is

To be a captive, and from ev'ry eye
Wou'd wiſh to hide the ſtory of my fate:
It is enough to be ſupremely wretch'd,
Without this cruel witneſs of my woe:
Too ſoon my name and ſorrows will be known.

LISOIS.

Reſpect is due to miſery like thine;
I will not urge thee further, but retire:
Perhaps ev'n here thy ſoul may find relief
In gen'rous treatment, and a milder fate.

SCENE III.

VAMIR, EMAR.

VAMIR.

A milder fate! I muſt not hope for it:
O I have liv'd too long.

EMAR.

Thank heav'n, my lord,
That we are fall'n amongſt ſuch noble foes,
And ſhall not groan beneath a ſtranger's pow'r.

VAMIR.

No yoke ſometimes ſo galling as a brother's.

EMAR.

But you were bred together, and the ties
Of tend'reſt friendſhip link'd your hearts.

VAMIR.

VAMIR

They did:

But O! the friendſhip of our early years
Soon takes its flight: he lov'd me once, and ſtill
This heart retains a brother's kindneſs for him:
I cannot hate him, tho' he conquer'd me.

EMAR.

He knows not yet how great a captive comes
To grace his triumph; knows not that a brother
Is in his pow'r, whom vengeance had inſpir'd.—

VAMIR.

No: Emar, never did a thought of vengeance
Enter my heart; a diff'rent paſſion ſway'd
The ſoul of Vamir: can it be, juſt heav'n!
Or is it but the lying voice of fame,
That my Amelia's falſe, that ſhe has broke
Her ſolemn vows? for whom too? added guilt
To her, and double ſorrow to thy friend!
The ſacred laws of nature, and the ties
Of tender love, all broken, all betray'd!
Unjuſt, inhuman brother!

EMAR.

Knows he then
How dear a treaſure he hath robb'd thee of

In thy Amelia? did not Vamir ſay
That he was ſtill a ſtranger to thy love?

VAMIR.

But ſhe is not: ſhe knows what ſolemn ties,
What ſtrict engagements, bound us to each other;
That at the altar, e'er we had confirm'd
Our mutual vows, the barb'rous Moor ruſh'd in,
And tore her from me; the baſe raviſhers
Eſcap'd my vengeance, and my happier brother
Enjoys the precious treaſure Vamir loſt.
Ungrateful woman! came I here, my friend,
But to reproach her? what will it avail?
She will not liſten to my fond complaint:
But to my royal maſter I have liv'd
A faithful ſervant, and to falſe Amelia,
And faithful will I die: when ſhe ſhall know
How well I lov'd her, ſhe may ſhed a tear,
And in a brother's arms lament my fate.

EMAR.

Repreſs thy ſorrows; ſee, the Duke approaches.

VAMIR.

Be ſtill, my heart.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

DUKE of FOIX, VAMIR, EMAR.

DUKE.

This myſtery alarms me:
But I muſt ſee this noble captive: ha!
He turns aſide with horror.

VAMIR.

Hateful life!
Muſt I ſupport thee ſtill? muſt I again
Behold the faithleſs wretch?

DUKE.

What do I hear?

VAMIR.

Doſt thou not know me?

DUKE.

Ha! my brother! Vamir!

VAMIR.

Alas! too ſure I am that wretched brother,
Thy vanquiſh'd foe, a poor abandon'd captive.

DUKE.

Thou art my brother ſtill, and I forgive thee;
But 'tis moſt ſtrange, and moſt unnatural:
Cou'd the king find no inſtrument but thee

To

To execute his vengeance on my head?
What had I done to Vamir?

VAMIR.

Made his life
Unhappy: wou'd that thou had'ſt ta'en it from me!

DUKE.

Dreadful effects of civil ſtrife!

VAMIR.

More dreadful
Are the deep wounds that pierce the heart of Vamir.

DUKE.

Againſt another foe I might have ſhewn
A ſoldier's courage, but I pity thee.

VAMIR.

Pity thyſelf, the wretch who has betray'd
His country, and deceiv'd the king that lov'd him;
A traitor, and unworthy of thy race.

DUKE.

Brand me not, Vamir, with th' opprobrious name
Of traitor, leaſt I ſhou'd forget myſelf,
And ſpurn thee for the inſult: no, my brother,
I'm not that baſe ungrateful wretch thou think'ſt me;
Thou ſee'ſt me ready to reſtore fair peace,
And heal the wounds of my divided country.

VAMIR.

VAMIR.

Thou heal our wounds! thou—

DUKE.

Yes: the day that ſeem'd
So fatal to thy peace ſhall quench the flames
Of public diſcord, and unite us all.

VAMIR.

O 'tis a day of ſorrow.

DUKE.

Of delight
And joy, the day that crowns my wiſhes —

VAMIR.

How!

DUKE.

Yes, Vamir, all is chang'd, and I am happy.

VAMIR.

It may be ſo: I heard indeed thy heart
Theſe three months paſt has been the ſlave of love;
And if report ſay true, moſt violent
And fierce thy paſſion.

DUKE.

Thou haſt heard aright;
I love her ev'n to madneſs: thou art come
In happy hour to make our bliſs complete.
Yes: I will lay my friends, my foes, my ev'ry claim,
Revenge and glory, all beneath her feet.

Go,

Go, tell her two unhappy brothers, long

[to his attendants.

By adverſe fate to diff'rent int'reſts bound,
Wait but a look from her to be united.

[to Vamir.

Blame not my paſſion, Vamir, when thou ſee'ſt
The lovely object, ſoon thou wilt approve it.

VAMIR. [aſide.

And does ſhe love thee? cruel thought!

DUKE.

At leaſt
She ought: one obſtacle alone remain'd,
And that ſhall be remov'd,

VAMIR. [aſide.

Inhuman brother!
Know'ſt thou what led me to this fatal place,
And mean'ſt thou to inſult me?

DUKE.

Let us bury
In deep oblivion ev'ry thought of diſcord;
Behold, the fair Amelia comes.

SCENE

SCENE V.

DUKE of FOIX, VAMIR, AMELIA.

AMELIA.

O heav'n!
What do I ſee? I die.

DUKE.

Amelia, liſten,
And mark how happineſs ariſeth oft
From our misfortunes; this day I have conquer'd,
And this day found a brother; thou, my Vamir,
Shalt be a witneſs to the pow'r of love.
What nor Amelia's pray'rs, nor her reproaches,
My gen'rous friend, my country, and my king,
Long time in vain ſollicited, her charms
At length have won: to them I yield ſubmiſſive.
Amelia, whilſt I was thy ſov'reign's foe,
Thou wou'd'ſt not liſten to my vows: henceforth,
I have no laws, no friends, no king, but thine:
So love commands, and love ſhall be obey'd.
Vamir, thou'rt free: be thou the meſſenger
Of welcome tidings to the court: away,
And tell the king I haſten to preſent
His fair ally, the conqu'ror who ſubdued
A rebel's heart, and of a dang'rous foe

Hath

Hath made a faithful ſubject; chang'd by her,
And her alone.

VAMIR. [aſide.

'Tis as I wiſh'd: my fate
Will ſoon be known: ſpeak, and pronounce our doom.

DUKE.

Amelia, ſpeak, art thou not ſatisfy'd
With my ſubmiſſion? Is it not enough
To ſee a conqueror thus humbly kneel
Before thee? Can my life alone content
Thy cruel heart? take it, ungrateful woman!
I wiſh'd but to preſerve it for thy ſake;
For thee alone I liv'd, for thee will die.

AMELIA.

I am aſtoniſh'd, and my fault'ring voice
Will ſcarce give utt'rance to my words: — my lord,
If thy great ſoul laments thy country's fate,
And feels for her diſtreſs, thy gen'rous care
Muſt ſpring from nobler motives than the wiſh
To ſerve Amelia; thou haſt heard the voice
Of pow'rful nature: what hath love to do
Where only honour hath a right to dictate?

DUKE.

'Tis thy own work, Amelia, all thy own:
O'er ev'ry int'reſt, ev'ry paſſion, love
Superior reigns; reproach me, cover me

With

With ſhame, no matter: I muſt force thy heart;
Come, to the altar.

VAMIR.

Dar'ſt thou ———

AMELIA.

No, my lord;
I'd ſooner die: my life's at thy command,
But not my heart: there is a fatal bar
Between us, and I never can be thine.

DUKE.

'Tis well, ungrateful — doſt thou hear her, Vamir?
But I'll be calm: I'll not complain of thee,
I ſee thee now: the ſoft perſuaſive arts
That call our paſſions forth, the flatt'ring hope
That's giv'n but to betray, the ſubtle poiſon
Spred o'er our hearts, deceitful all and vain,
No longer ſhall ſeduce my eaſy faith,
The eye of reaſon hath detected them,
And the ſame art that bound hath ſet me free:
I will not bluſh before thee, Vamir: no,
I will not be deſpis'd: but let me ſee
This hidden rival, bring him here before me,
And I will yield him up the worthleſs prize;
For know, I have contempt enough for both
To wiſh you were united; that alone
Shou'd be your puniſhment.

AMELIA.

AMELIA.

Perhaps, my lord,
'Twere fitteſt for Amelia to retire
In ſilence, but I hold my honour dear,
And muſt defend it: I have been accus'd
Before your brother, and muſt anſwer thee.
Know then, I'm deſtin'd to another's arms;
I own my love, my tender paſſion for him;
Amelia were unworthy of his heart,
Had ſhe e'er giv'n a diſtant hope to thee:
But you wou'd ſeize my faith and liberty,
As if they were by right of conqueſt thine.
I ow'd thee much, but injuries like theſe,
My lord, diſcharge the debt of gratitude,
And cancel all: I ſaw, and pity'd long
The violence of thy fruitleſs paſſion for me;
Do not then make me hate thee: I rejected
Thy proffer'd vows, but never ſcorn'd thy love:
I wiſh'd for thy eſteem, and gave thee mine.

DUKE.

Perfidious woman! nought haſt thou deſerv'd
But my reſentment, which thou ſoon ſhalt know
Is equal to my love: you waited then
For Vamir to be witneſs of my ſhame!

I thou'd

I ſhou'd have thought he was himſelf the traitor,
If — but he ne'er beheld thy fatal charms,
My happier brother never knew Amelia.
Who is this rival? let me know his name,
But think not I will tamely yield to him.
No: I deceiv'd thee there, but cannot long
Diſſemble; I will drag thee to the altar,
There, as he dies in torment, ſhall he ſee
Our hands united; I will dip in blood
The torch of Hymen: well I know that princes
Have been deſpis'd for mean and vulgar ſlaves,
But I ſhall find him.

VAMIR.

Why ſhou'd'ſt thou ſuppoſe
This rival ſo contemptible?

DUKE.

And why
Shou'd'ſt thou excuſe him? Did'ſt thou never know her?
'Tis dreadful to conceive it. If thou did'ſt,
Now, traitor, tremble.

VAMIR.

Vamir tremble? No:
Too long already I have born in ſilence
Thy cruel inſults; know me now, barbarian,

Know

Know a deſpair that's equal to thy own:
Strike here; behold thy brother, and thy rival.

DUKE.

Thou, Vamir, thou?

VAMIR.

Yes: for theſe two years paſt
We've been united in the ſtricteſt bonds
Of tender love; the only good on earth
I wiſh'd to keep, thy cruel hand hath ſtrove
To raviſh from me, made my life unhappy:
Judge of my mis'ries by thy own: we both
Are jealous, both were born the ſlaves of paſſion:
Hatred and love, reſentment, and deſpair,
Poſſeſs our ſouls, and all in the extreme:
Thou wert my rival, therefore I oppos'd thee:
Furious and blind, I ran, I flew to ſave
The object of my love; not all thy pow'r
Reſtrain'd me, nor my weakneſs, time nor place,
Not ev'n thy noble courage; love prevail'd
O'er friendſhip, and the ties of blood: be thou
Cruel like me, like me unnatural,
Whilſt I have life, thou never can'ſt enjoy
Thy conqueſt, never can'ſt poſſeſs Amelia:
Strike then and puniſh, ſhed thy brother's blood;

But

when thou dragg'ſt her with thee to the altar,
nember, ſhe's thy ſiſter, and my wife.

DUKE.

urds, ſeize the traitor, take him from my ſight.

AMELIA.

', cruel prince; art thou inflexible,
if to the voice of nature; O, my lord!

VAMIR.

not for me, Amelia, Vamir's fate
o be envy'd: he moſt claims your pity
io hath betray'd his king, and injur'd thee:
n reveng'd, the victory is mine;
thou art hated here, and I'm belov'd.

AMELIA. [kneeling to the Duke.

leareſt prince, my lord, ſee at your feet———

DUKE.

ay with him: riſe, madam, for your tears
l fruitleſs pray'rs to ſave a traitor's life
pour freſh poiſon o'er my wounded heart
it bleeds for thee; but I will die, Amelia,
unreveng'd: when thou ſhalt feel my rage,
uſe thyſelf; the work is all thy own.

AMELIA.

AMELIA.

I cannot leave thee: O, my lord, yet hear ——

DUKE.

If I muſt hear thee, ſpeak, go on.

SCENE VI.

The DUKE, VAMIR, AMELIA, LISOIS.

LISOIS.

My lord,
The people are in arms; at Vamir's name
They roſe tumultuous, and on ev'ry ſide
Diſorder reigns; th'affrighted ſoldiers leave
Their colours, and in wild confuſion fly:
Mean time the foe unites his ſcatter'd pow'rs,
And ruſhes on us.

DUKE.

Go, ungrateful woman!
Thou haſt not long to glory in thy crimes;
Follow her —

[to one of her attendants.

I muſt to the factious croud
And ſhew myſelf: thou, Liſois, guard this traitor.

SCENE VII.

LISOIS.

Art thou a traitor? coud'ſt thou thus diſgrace
Thy noble blood, to violate the laws

Of

Of nature? cou'd a prince ſo far forget
His duty and himſelf?

VAMIR.

I never did:
The people's juſt: my brother is a rebel,
And has betray'd his maſter.

LISOIS.

Hear me, Vamir:
My ſoul deſires no greater happineſs
Than to unite you: long have I beheld
With deep regret my bleeding country's woes,
Our fields laid waſte, and nature ſacrific'd
To diſcord and revenge; the haughty Moor,
Rais'd on our ruins, menacing the ſtate,
Which we have weaken'd by our own diviſions.
O, if thou bear'ſt a heart that's truly noble,
And worthy of thy race, now ſave thy country;
Exert thy pow'r to reconcile the king,
Soften thy brother, and put out the flames
Of civil war.

VAMIR.

Impoſſible! thy cares
Are fruitleſs all and vain: if nought but diſcord,
Revenge and hatred, led me to the field,
Had glory and ambition fir'd my breaſt,

Thou

Thou might'ſt have hoped indeed to re-unite us;
But there's a bar more fatal ſtill behind.

LISOIS.

What cou'd it be! O tell me, Vamir.

VAMIR.

Love:
Love that has fill'd this breaſt with ſavage fury,
And made my brother cruel and inhuman.

LISOIS.

Good heav'n! that vain caprice ſhou'd thus deſtory
The nobleſt purpoſes! Almighty love,
Can'ſt thou reverſe the laws of nature, fill
With unrelenting hate the jealous hearts
Of fondeſt brothers, and in ev'ry clime
By private paſſions work the public ruin?
Vamir, I feel for both, but long have ſerv'd
Thy brother; I muſt hence, and ſecond him
Againſt thy factious friends: the ſtrife is dreadful,
And much I fear will have a bloody end;
But I muſt fly to ſuccour him: farewell;
Thou art my pris'ner, but I leave thee here;
Give me thy word, that ſhall ſuffice.

VAMIR.

I do.

LISOIS

LISOIS.

Wou'd I cou'd knit you in the bonds of peace!
But much more to be fear'd than all thy foes,
And far more fatal, is the tyrant, love.

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

VAMIR, AMELIA, EMAR.

AMELIA.

O Vamir, how the hand of heav'n hath mark'd
My life with ſad variety of woe!
The chance of war, that tore me from thy arms,
Once more hath join'd us; but, alas! we meet
On mournful terms, meet but to part; my Vamir,
Did'ſt thou not ſay it muſt be ſo?

VAMIR.

It muſt:
Thou ſeeſt me chain'd by honour's laws beneath
A rival's pow'r: my ſacred word is giv'n:
Vamir may die, but muſt not follow thee.

AMELIA.

Thou who haſt dar'd to fight, art thou afraid
To flee from him?

VAMIR.

I am: my honour binds me:
Take thou advantage of the gen'ral tumult,
Which favors thy retreat; a guard attends
To aid thy flight; heav'n will protect thy virtues;
Hope for the beſt.

AMELIA.

What can Amelia hope,
When thou art from her?

VAMIR.

'Tis but for a day.

AMELIA.

O but that day will be an age to me.
Grant, heav'n! my tears and terrors may be vain.
The Moor, I know, thirſts for my Vamir's blood;
Think'ſt thou thy brother will not give it him?
He loves with fury, and he hates with rancour;
His hatred, like his love, is in extreme:
He is thy rival, and the Moor's ally.
I tremble for thee.

VAMIR.

He wou'd never dare ——

AMELIA.

O his impetuous paſſion knows no bounds.

VAMIR.

VAMIR.

He muſt be taught to know them ſoon; the king
Comes to revenge us; half his force already
Throngs to the royal ſtandard; if thou lov'ſt me,
Fly, my Amelia, from th' impending ſtorm,
From dreadful ſlaughter, and the din of arms,
And all the terrors of a bloody field;
But, above all, avoid my furious rival,
Whoſe jealous love deſpis'd, will turn to rage;
Avoid an inſult Vamir muſt revenge,
Or periſh in th' attempt: my dear Amelia,
Hope of my life, the only good on earth
I have to boaſt, do not expoſe thyſelf
To needleſs dangers, but retire in ſafety.

AMELIA.

Why wilt thou hazard then thy precious life,
And ſtay without Amelia?

VAMIR.

When thou'rt ſafe,
I ſhall not fear my brother; ſoon perhaps
Vamir may prove his beſt ſupport: to-day
I am his priſ'ner, but perchance to-morrow
May be his patron, and perſuade the king
To ſpare a rebel: to protect my rival

Were noble triumph. Haſte, Amelia, leave
This ſeat of danger.

AMELIA.

Whereſoever fate
Shall caſt my hapleſs lot, I'll carry with me
My hatred and my love; 'mid'ſt ev'ry danger,
In the wild deſart, or the gloomy dungeon,
In exile, or in chains, in death itſelf,
Still ſhall I think on, ſtill adore my Vamir:
But O! I cannot bear to live without thee.

VAMIR.

It is too much: thy griefs unman my ſoul.
What noiſe was that? O thou haſt ſtaid too long.

SCENE II.

AMELIA, VAMIR, DUKE of FOIX, Guards.

DUKE.

I hear his voice; 'tis he: ſtay, villain, thou
Who haſt betray'd me.

VAMIR.

I betray'd thee not.
Now ſatiate thy revenge, and take my life;
Loſe not a moment, for the hand of heav'n
Is rais'd againſt thee: tremble, ſlave, thy king
Approaches: thou haſt conquer'd none but Vamir:
Thy maſter comes, take heed.

DUKE

DUKE.

He may revenge,
But cannot ſave thee; for thy blood—

AMELIA.

O no,
Amelia's guilty: let Amelia die,
And not my Vamir: I deceiv'd thy guards,
And barter'd with them to aſſiſt my flight
From hated ſlav'ry, and a tyrant's pow'r:
Puniſh my crimes, but O reſpect a brother,
Reſpect thyſelf, thy own unblemiſh'd fame:
He ne'er betray'd, but loves and wou'd have ſerv'd thee,
Ev'n when thy rage had doom'd him to deſtruction.
What crime has he committed? none, my lord,
None but the crime of loving his Amelia.

DUKE.

The more thou plead'ſt for him, the more his guilt:
Thou art his murth'rer: thou, whoſe fatal charms
Have poiſon'd all our happineſs, and arm'd
Our hands againſt each other, may the blood
Of both fall on thee! now thou weep'ſt, thy tears
No longer ſhall deceive me: I muſt die,
But Vamir firſt ſhall periſh. Yet I love thee,
Ev'n yet thou may'ſt eſcape the fatal blow;

Accept my hand, attend me to the altar,
And ſeal his pardon there.

AMELIA.

Who, I, my lord?

DUKE.

It is enough.

AMELIA.

Shall I be falſe to Vamir?

DUKE

Stop--Anſwer me.

AMELIA.

I cannot.

DUKE.

Let him die.

VAMIR.

Amelia, never let his threats o'ercome
Thy noble faith, but love me well enough
To ſee me periſh: leave me to my fate;
Now I ſhall fall triumphant: ſhou'd'ſt thou yield,
Vamir muſt die by his Amelia's hand.

DUKE.

Guards, drag the traitor to the tow'r: away.

SCENE III.

DUKE, AMELIA.

AMELIA.

And wilt thou make this horrid ſacrifice?
Poilute thee with the blood of innocence;
Thou wilt not? DUKE.

DUKE.

Yes: to hate thee, and to die,
Is all I wiſh; to ſee thee more unhappy,
More wretched than myſelf, to ſhed the blood
That's deareſt to thee, and to make thy days
As full of woe, as was that fatal hour
Which hath deſtroy'd us all. Away, and leave me;
The ſight of thee diſtracts me.

SCENE IV.

DUKE, AMELIA, LISOIS.

From thy juſtice,
And, that alone, I can expect relief.
Help me to ſoften this obdurate heart:
Aſſiſt me, Liſois.

DUKE.

If thou liſten'ſt to her,
Thou'rt not my friend.

AMELIA.

I call juſt heav'n to witneſs.

DUKE.

Hence from my ſight: I loath thee.

AMELIA.

Tyrant, go,
For I abhor thee; ſpite of all thy rage,
I thought a woman might at leaſt command
Some cold reſpect: but love, that ſoftens all,

Hath loſt its tender influence o'er thy heart:
I leave thee to thy rage; go, ſacrifice
Thy victims, 'midſt thy crimes be ſure thou count
Amelia's death, and with it count thy own,
For vengeance comes, and in thy puniſhment
Unites us all; inglorious ſhalt thou periſh,
And unlamented. Die, inhuman ſavage;
And may that hatred, that contempt of thee,
Which now I feel, purſue thy memory,
And after ages execrate thy name!

SCENE V.

DUKE of FOIX, LISOIS.

DUKE.

Yes, cruel prophet, I expect the doom
Pronounc'd by thee, that diſcord's fatal hand
Shall ſeize on all, and join us in the tomb.

LISOIS.

Rage has o'erpower'd him, and his ſenſes fail.

DUKE.

What ſays my friend? am I to ſuffer ſhame
And inſult thus; and ſhall my haughty rival
Bear off the falſe perfidious dear Amelia?
Wilt thou bear this, or waits't thou till the traitor
Shall raiſe a pow'rful faction to enſlave me?

LISOIS.

LISOIS.

Too well I ſee, my Lord, the royal party
Hath ſpread ſedition thro' the multitude,
And ſhook their faith.

DUKE.

Vamir lights up the flame:
He has betray'd us all.

LISOIS.

I never meant
To palliate Vamir's crimes, for much I dread
The fatal conſequence; already France
Is arm'd againſt us. If the people ſeek
Their ſafety in rebellion, all is loſt,
Danger's on ev'ry ſide.

DUKE.

What's to be done?

LISOIS.

Prevent it; rage and love muſt be ſubdued;
Then may we conquer all. We muſt be firm
And reſolute; avoid, or brave the ſtorm:
Do as thou wilt, my hand is ready ſtill
To aid my friend. This morning thou had'ſt thought's
Of treating with the king: if thou command'ſt,
I'll go, my Lord, ev'n now, and ſue for peace;
Or if we try the fortune of the day,

The faithful Liſois ſhall attend thee ſtill:
There, if thou fall'ſt, thy friend ſhall not ſurvive thee.

DUKE.

Alone I will deſcend into the grave:
Live thou, to ſerve my cauſe, and to revenge me.
My hour is come, I muſt fulfil my fate:
Who wiſhes but for death, is ſure to find it;
But mine ſhou'd come with all his terrors round him;
I muſt have vengeance; and whene'er I fall,
Will drag my rival with me to the tomb.

LISOIS.

What horrid thoughts are theſe!

DUKE.

In yonder tow'r
He is confin'd: 'tis under thy command,
And thou did'ſt promiſe, that when'er—

LISOIS.

Of whom
Speak'ſt thou, my lord, a brother?

DUKE.

No: a traitor,
My worſt of foes, a rival who abhors me;
One who has robb'd me of my deareſt treaſure:
The Moor demands his head, and I have promis'd
To give it him.

LISOIS.

LISOIS.

Ha! promis'd to ſhake off
The bonds of nature and humanity!

DUKE.

Long ſince they had proſcrib'd him.

LISOIS.

And to them,
Thou yield'ſt his life?

DUKE.

Not to their vengeance only,
But to my own, which ſhall be ſatisfy'd.
What is the Moor to me, or what my country?

LISOIS.

To love then you wou'd make the ſacrifice,
And I muſt be the executioner.

DUKE.

No: I expect not ſo much juſtice from thee;
I am a wretch, abandon'd and forlorn,
Betray'd by love, deſerted by my friend;
But there are thoſe who yet will keep their promiſe;
Others, perhaps, may ſerve me, nor alledge
Such poor excuſes for ingratitude.

LISOIS.

[After a long ſilence.

I am reſolv'd; and be it guilt or juſtice,
Ne'er ſhalt thou ſay, that Liſois hath betray'd thee:
Thou art unhappy: Vamir is a traitor.

It is enough; I love thee, and conſent:
There is a time for deſperate extremes,
When duties the moſt ſacred muſt give way
To hard neceſſity: at ſuch an hour
I cannot ſuffer thee to try the faith
Of any heart but mine: ſucceſs alone
Muſt prove my friendſhip: ſoon ſhalt thou determine
Whether thy Liſois lov'd thee, and was faithful.

DUKE.

Once more in ſorrow I behold a friend;
Deſerted by the world, in thee I find
My only refuge: thou wilt not permit
A haughty rival to inſult my rage,
To trample on my aſhes, and enjoy
My kingdom in the arms of my Amelia.

LISOIS.

I will not; but in recompenſe for this,
I muſt demand another ſacrifice.

DUKE.

What is it? ſpeak.

LISOIS.

I cannot bear the Moor,
Our inſolent protector; cannot bear
To ſee him lord it o'er thy noble ſubjects.
I wou'd not ſerve a tyrant, nor ſubmit

To ſhameful ſlav'ry for a poor ſupport
We do not want; 'tis in our pow'r at leaſt
To die without him: leave to me, my lord,
The conduct of this day, perhaps my ſervice
May claim it of thee: Liſois and the Moor
Wou'd ne'er agree: I muſt command alone,
To the laſt hour.

DUKE.

Thou ſhalt: I'll give thee all
Thou can'ſt deſire, let but Amelia feel
Deſpair like mine, and weep in tears of blood
Her treach'rous lover: let me hear her groans
In my laſt moments to delight my ſoul;
And for the reſt, 'tis equal all: to thee
I truſt my glory; go, diſpoſe, command,
Prepare thee for the field. I hope not now
For vict'ry, nor for honourable death;
For what is honour to a heart like mine,
Sunk in deſpair! O, be the ſad remembrance
Of a falſe miſtreſs, and a cruel rival,
Bury'd with me in everlaſting ſilence!

LISOIS.

Eternal night, if poſſible, ſhou'd hide
Such dreadful deeds: wou'd death had clos'd our eyes
Before this day of horrors; but I go
To keep my word, and ſave my friend. Farewell.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

DUKE of FOIX, an Officer.

DUKE.

Perpetual mis'ry! am I doom'd to ſee
Nothing but faction, treaſon, and revolt?
Where are the rebels, do they mutiny?

OFFICER.

At ſight of you, my lord, the croud diſpers'd.

DUKE.

On ev'ry ſide I am oppreſs'd by Vamir;
All hearts are his; my mis'ries are complete:
But what hath Liſois done?

OFFICER.

His watchful courage
Defends our ramparts 'gainſt the foe.

DUKE.

That ſoldier
You brought to me in ſecret, has he done
What I commanded?

OFFICER.

Yes, my lord: e'er now
He's at the tow'r.

DUKE.

'Tis well: a common arm
Will do it beſt, and execute my vengeance

Without

Without remorſe: Liſois' uncertain heart
Was not to be depended on; methought
He look'd with too much coolneſs on my rage;
We ſeldom try to mitigate a grief,
Which we contemn: to other hands I'll truſt
My great revenge.—Go thou, and fetch my ſtandard,
Let it be brought upon the ramparts to me:
New dangers preſs, and for the field again
We muſt prepare: let the ſame zeal inſpire thee,
And the ſame courage, imitate thy maſter,
And learn of him—to die,

[Exit. Officer.

E'er this 'tis done.

A baſe ungrateful woman dips my hands
In brother's blood, and leads me to the tomb:
A guilty murth'rer, ha! what means my heart?
I've nouriſh'd vengeance long; and ſhall I not
Enjoy it now? I tremble: and a voice,
Solemn and ſad, cries from my inmoſt ſoul,
Stop, Foix, he is thy brother, hapleſs prince,
Call back the murth'rer: Vamir was thy friend.
O ſweet remembrance of our infant years,
When in the days of innocence our hearts
Spoke nature's language, and imparted free
Our mutual wiſhes! O, how oft has Vamir
Partook my griefs, and with a brother's hand,

Wiped off the falling tears! and ſhall I now
Deſtroy him? O thou fatal paſſion, where,
Where haſt thou led me? ſure I was not born
This ſavage, this barbarian: Vamir yet
Was guilty; Vamir robb'd me of my life,
In my Amelia: ſtill I am unjuſt;
He lov'd; was that a crime to merit death?
Alas! nor time, nor war, nor abſence, cool'd
Their faithful paſſion; ſtill their guiltleſs flame
In pureſt luſtre ſhone, before my heart
Was poiſon'd by the cruel draught of love:
But Vamir braves my wrath, and is my foe;
Deceives me, hates me; yet he is my brother.
He ſhou'd have liv'd, he was belov'd, and happy,
And only I ſhou'd periſh: I will die
But, as I liv'd, with honour. Pity melts me,
Nature determines, and I will forgive him.
'Tis time—

SCENE II.

DUKE of FOIX, an Officer.

DUKE.

Prevent a parricide: away,
Haſte to the tow'r, reverſe my orders; go,
And let my brother——

OFFICER.

OFFICER.

O my Lord——

DUKE.

What ſay'ſt thou!
Run, fly, obey me.

OFFICER.

Near the gate this moment
I ſaw a body cover'd o'er with blood,
Carry'd in ſecret forth by Liſois' orders,
And much I fear——

DUKE.

O heav'n! my brother's dead
And I yet live: earth hath not ſwallow'd me,
Nor light'ning blaſted: a baſe murtherer,
Foe to his country, an unnat'ral brother,
How love has chang'd me! what a load of guilt
Have I to anſwer for! the veil's remov'd;
And now, alas! I know myſelf too well;
I cannot be more guilty: O my brother!
I feel I lov'd thee, yet I ſlew thee, Vamir.

OFFICER.

Amelia comes, my Lord, and begs to ſpeak
In private with you.

DUKE.

O! I muſt not ſee her,
Not for the world: I cannot bear it: no,

She

She will revenge the murther in my blood:
But let her come: I tremble to behold her.

SCENE III.

DUKE of FOIX, AMELIA, THAIS.

AMELIA.

My lord, you have prevail'd: and ſince that hatred
(How can I call it by another name)
Which hath ſo long purſued me, now requires
A brother's blood, or his Amelia's hand,
Take it: the choice is made, and I am thine:
Remember, I'm the purchaſe of thy guilt:
Looſen his chains, and ſet my Vamir free,
That I no more may tremble for his life,
And I will give thee all, yield up my hopes
Of happineſs with him, and follow thee,
Ev'n to the altar; there the hand that gives
My faith away ſhall puniſh all my weakneſs.
Know, at the temple, where thy bridal vows——
But thou deſir'ſt my hand, and that alone
I have to give thee: ha! thou'rt ſilent: ſay,
Is Vamir, is thy brother freed already?

DUKE.

My brother!

AMELIA.

Gracious heav'n!—remove my fears,
Thy eyes are bath'd in tears.

DUKE.

DUKE.

Thou aſk'ſt his life.

AMELIA.

at do I hear? didſt thou not promiſe me——

DUKE.

too late.

AMELIA.

Too late! O Vamir!

DUKE.

Yes,
indeed: wou'd it were not, Amelia;
cruel Liſois has obey'd my orders
faithfully: O live, to puniſh me;
ce this inhuman, this unnat'ral heart,
t lov'd thee but too well: I kill'd my brother,
for thy ſake: revenge on me the crimes
ich but for thee I never had committed.

AMELIA. [Falling into the arms of Thais.

nir is dead, barbarian!

DUKE.

And thy hand
ll ſhed the murth'rer's blood.

AMELIA. [Fainting.

And is he gone?
Vamir——

DUKE.

DUKE.

Thy reproaches——

AMELIA.

Spare me, ſpare me,
I'll not reproach thee; take thy ſorrows hence,
And thy repentance: let me but embrace him,
And die.

DUKE.

Amelia, thou haſt too much cauſe
To grieve, but O for pity take this life
That's hateful to me; but I've not deſerv'd
To periſh by thy hand; but thou ſhalt guide——

SCENE IV.

DUKE, AMELIA, LISOIS.

LISOIS.

What wou'd thy raſhneſs do?

[They diſarm him.

DUKE.

An act of juſtice:
Puniſh myſelf.

AMELIA.

Wert thou his vile accomplice?

DUKE.

Thou miniſter of guilt, thou haſt obey'd me.

LISOIS.

LISOIS.

I promis'd you, my lord, and I have done
But what I ought.

DUKE.

Thy ſtuborn virtue oft
Hath check'd my follies, and oppos'd my weakneſs;
But when I bade thee be a murtherer,
And kill my brother, then thou wert obedient.

LISOIS.

When I refus'd but now to execute
The bloody office, did'ſt thou not employ
Another hand?

DUKE.

Love, pow'rful love, that chain'd
My reaſon down, and ſway'd my fooliſh heart,
Love pleads for me; but thou whoſe wiſdom calms
Each riſing paſſion, whoſe unalter'd ſoul,
Firm and unſhaken, I ſo oft have feard,
So oft reſpected, that thou, thus unmov'd,
Shoud'ſt ſuffer ſuch a deed of horror; O
'Tis terrible!

LISOIS.

Since ſorrow and repentance,
Virtue's beſt monitors, have pierc'd thy ſoul
With juſt remorſe: ſince, ſpite of all thy raſhneſs,
To ſave a brother's blood thou gladly now

Would'ſt

Woud'ſt give thy own; ye both ſhall find a friend.
Keep thou thy penitence.

[To the Duke.

Dry up thy tears.

[To Amelia.

This is a day of triumph. Prince come forth:
Embrace thy brother.

[The Scene opens, and diſcovers Vamir.

AMELIA.

O my Vamir!

DUKE.

Ha!
My brother!

AMELIA.

Gracious heaven!

DUKE.

Can it be?
Again I ſee, again embrace my brother.

DUKE.

O thy forgiveneſs makes my crime ſtill greater.

AMELIA.

O noble Liſois, thou haſt giv'n me life.

DUKE.

Life to us all!

LISOIS.

A baſe aſſaſſin rais'd
His arm 'gainſt Vamir, but I fell'd the traitor,
And laid him breathleſs at my feet, then ſeiz'd

That

That I had ſhed thy brother's blood: I knew
Thou woud'ſt repent, and wiſh the deed undone.

DUKE.

This was a ſervice I can ne'er reward,
But by endeav'ring to be worthy of it:
My crime ſits heavy on me, and my eyes,
Fix'd on the earth, dare not look up to Vamir,
And to the wrong'd Amelia.

VAMIR.

We wou'd both
Have ſerv'd thee with our royal maſter; both
Are ſtill devoted to thee. What, my brother,
Is thy deſign? O ſpeak.

DUKE.

To do you juſtice:
To expiate, by the greateſt puniſhment,
The greateſt crime that love and fierce reſentment
Cou'd e'er commit: long I ador'd Amelia;
Ev'n when I gave her Vamir up to death,
I lov'd Amelia: I adore her ſtill,
Nay more than ever, yet I yield her to thee,
And ſacrifice my heart to make you bleſt.
Take her, be happy, and forgive thy brother.

VAMIR.

Behold me at thy feet, with gratitude
Warm as thy bounty, as thy love ſincere.

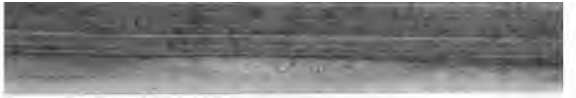
AMELIA.

Permit me to embrace thy knees with Vamir,
Accept our tend'reſt friendſhip, for thy goodneſs
Has amply paid for all my ſuffrings paſt.

DUKE.

No more of this, it doubles my misfortunes,
And ſhews me but what happineſs I've loſt:
But I will learn from you to follow virtue,
My heart is yours: I'm now indeed thy brother,
By thy example I will love my country.
Let us away, and to the king relate
My crimes, my ſorrows, and thy happineſs:
Let Vamir's zeal and Vamir's truth be mine,
Faithful to France, to friendſhip, and to thee;
Foix ſhall deſerve your pardon and your praiſe;
Ye ſhall forget his follies and his crimes,
And henceforth know him only by his virtues.

END of the SECOND VOLUME.



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